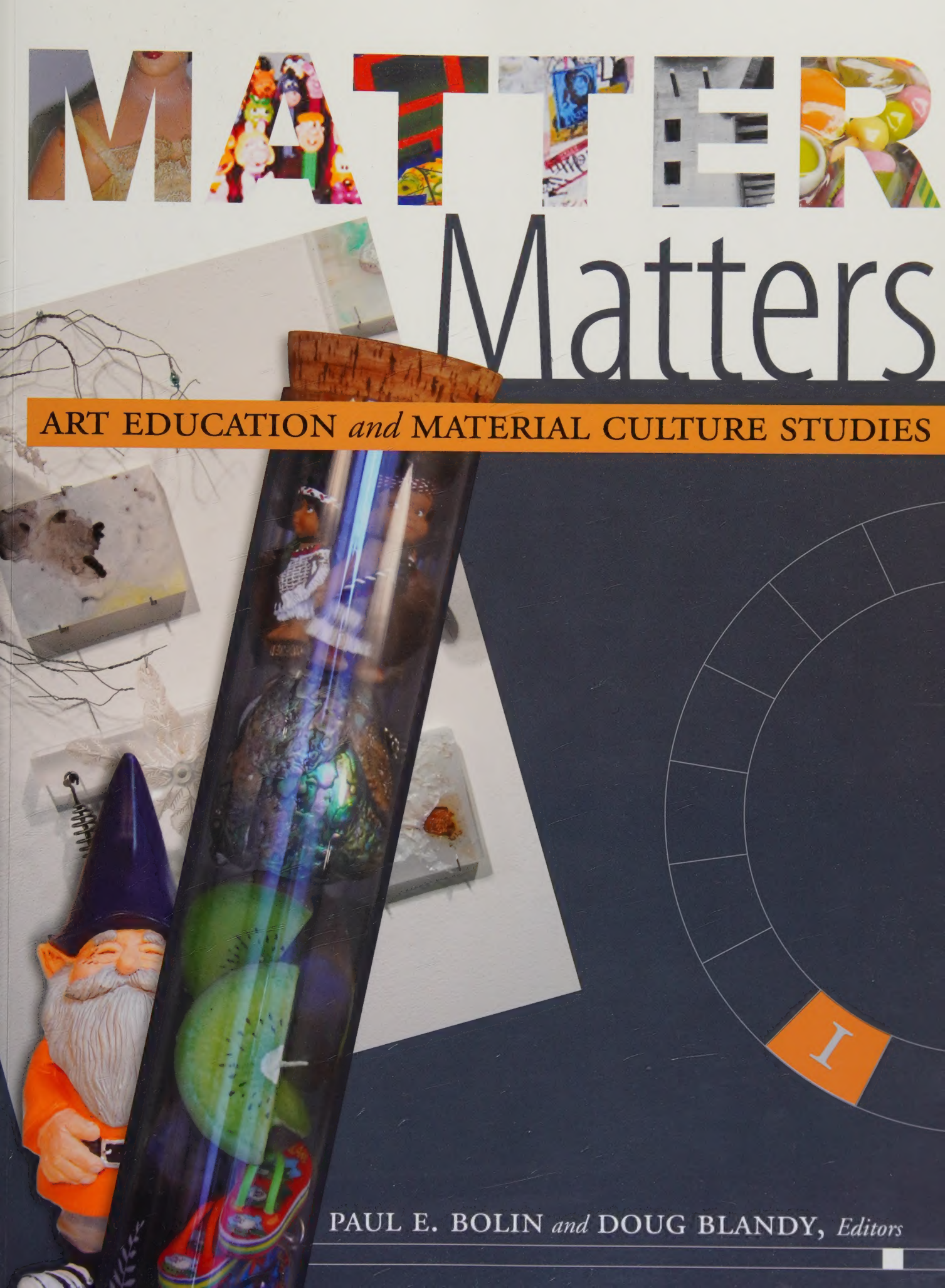
MATTER
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ART EDUCATION and MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES
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PAUL E. BOLIN and DOUG BLANDY, Editors

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MATTER MATTERS

ART EDUCATION *and* MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES

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Order No. 299
ISBN 978-1-890160-51-7

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COVER:

Partial images in MATTER headline (left to right): "1703 French Peignoir" doll, p. 39; Pez candy containers, p. 127; *Artica Kit*, p. 113; Haight Ashbury garbage can, p. 117; Augarten L-Tower, Vienna, Austria, p. 18; and objects from a Curriculum Development Activity, p. 115.

Large images (left to right): Detail from *Weathering* by Mary Hafeli, p. 31, Gnome, photographed by Christina Bain, p. 141; and talking stick *Bottled Godzone*, by Jill Smith, photographed by Kerry-Ann Boyle, p 98.

MATTER MATTERS

ART EDUCATION *and* MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES

PAUL E. BOLIN *and* DOUG BLANDY, *Editors*

Acknowledgments

As editors we would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals, organizations, and institutions who made this work possible. We thank the National Art Education Association Professional Materials Committee for their positive review of our book proposal and ongoing strong support of this publication. We appreciate the excellent work done by the publications staff at the National Art Education Association. Support from the Arts and Administration Program and Center for Community Arts and Cultural Policy at the University of Oregon, as well as The University of Texas at Austin, College of Fine Arts E. W. Doty Professorship in Fine Arts, were instrumental in helping us to carry out work on this book. Also contributing to this publication were graduate students Lauren Glover and Marya Spont from The University of Texas at Austin, and Myra Tam from the University of Oregon. We also thank the authors of the chapters included in this volume. We appreciate the timely and thoughtful attention each of them has given to this project.

Dedicated to the memory of June King McFee, mentor and friend

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Introduction ■ PAUL E. BOLIN AND DOUG BLANDY, EDITORS

Matter Matters is a contribution to the growing dialogue about material culture, specifically as it pertains to the field of art education. In recent years there has been increased discussion regarding the study of material culture within art education, yet more conversation about the collaborative alignment of these areas needs to occur. This book provides a forum and focal point for such exchange. In this edited volume, 17 chapters address theoretical and practical issues, ideas, and questions related to the study of and teaching about a wide range of objects and expressions in our contemporary world.

The term "material culture" is not a recent linguistic fabrication. Rather, this two-word phrase can be found in academic writings about objects and their meanings as early as 1875 (Schlereth, 1985, 1992). Since that time "material culture" has taken on a variety of connotations and undergone a number of nuanced changes. However, the chapters chosen for this book reflect our belief that material culture is "a descriptor of any and all human-constructed or human-mediated objects, forms, or expressions, manifested consciously or unconsciously through culturally acquired behaviors" (Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p. 249). With this delineation of material culture in mind, we ask the broad question here: How might the recognition of this view toward objects, forms, and expressions contribute to our understandings and practices within the field of art education?

More than thirty years ago, noted art educators June King McFee and Rogena Degge referred to the teaching of "material culture" (p. 280) in their 1977 art education textbook *Art, Culture, and Environment.* Other writers have advocated the study of common objects and everyday spaces in meaningful ways within art education since at least the 1930s and '40s (e.g., Haggerty, 1935, 1938; Faulkner, Ziegfeld, & Hill, 1941; Ziegfeld & Smith, 1944). The study and teaching of material culture is manifesting an increasing presence both within art education and outside this academic field. The art writer W. J. T. Mitchell (2005) refers to this growing engagement with the investigation of "things" by a vast range of "interdisciplinary discussion groups" as a recent "eruption of interest in material culture in academia" (pp. 111, 112). Particularly for art educators, the literature of our field contains an increasing number of discussions pertaining to the investigation of familiar "artifacts" and other forms of material culture (e.g., Bolin & Blandy, 2003; Burkhart, 2006; Davenport, 2003; Feldhusen, 2008; Kader, 2000, 2003; Marshall, 2002; Ulbricht, 2007). The authors included in this anthology expand the conversation about material culture in art education, both in quantity and depth.

This book is the first that specifically, as an entire volume, considers links between art education and material culture studies. There are a number of books published by the National Art Education Association that directly address the importance of studying objects (e.g., Feldman, 1997; Fitzpatrick, 1992; Hurwitz, Madeja, & Katter, 2003), yet a large number of the artifacts discussed in these books are museum-based objects or those situated within the world of fine art. Moreover, as cited by Mitchell (2005), there is an extensive body of literature related to material culture emerging within a wide variety of academic fields and disciplines. These scholarly areas include "the triad of art, architectural, and decorative arts history; cultural geography; the history of technology; folkloristics; historical archaeology; cultural anthropology, as well as cultural and social history" (Schlereth, 1985, p. 6). More recent discussions of material culture are found within the fields of "African American studies, materials science research, gender studies, hermeneutics, horticulture, semiotics, textile studies, museum studies, industrial archaeology, biology, genetics, microphysics, and

religious studies" (Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p. 251), to the point that "there is hardly a field or profession where the study of material evidence has not raised new questions or brought new insights to old ones" (Martin & Garrison, 1997, p. 403). What is omitted from the writings in these various professional areas, however, are publications that discuss directly the *educational value* of exploring the meanings of objects and expressions from the standpoint of bringing together the fields of material culture studies and art education. *Matter Matters* is intended to help address this omission.

Some readers may come to this book believing that the literature of material culture is duplicated within that of visual culture (for information on visual culture see Duncum, 2001; Evans & Hall, 1999; Freedman, 2003; Mirzoeff, 2002, 2005; Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). However, an examination of publications about visual culture shows this not to be the case. Similarities exist between the two fields, yet the current body of literature within visual culture does not address the same range of topics, ideas, objects, and research methodologies examined and utilized within the purview of material culture studies. For these reasons, *Matter Matters* holds a distinctive place within the collection of literature both inside and outside the field of art education.

Matter Matters is intended for a variety of audiences in art education and other related fields of study. The readership of this book within art education may include those working in higher education, art teachers in EC through grade 12, preservice art teachers, graduate students in art education, museum educators, and art educators working in community-based settings. The audience for this publication outside art education may include, but is not limited to, individuals active in museum studies, anthropology, American Studies, folklore, popular culture, media studies, history, art history, and curriculum development and classroom instruction within various subject areas. This volume is intended to provide readers with theoretical perspectives and practical instructional ideas related to teaching about and through objects and expressions from the surrounding world. For this reason, two primary divisions are included in the book: Section I: Theoretical Perspectives on Material Culture and Art Education, and Section II: Practical Application of Material Culture Studies within Art Education.

We believe that matter matters. The rich and expanding multi-sensory world and art-world that surround and mix with our lives each day provide increasing possibilities for critical analysis and engaging interpretation and conversation. As the field of art education expands to include the examination of a more inclusive range of objects and expressions than has been widely accepted for investigation in the past, *Matter Matters* furnishes readers with theoretical insights and practical ideas related to teaching about and through objects and expressions from the world around us. *Matter Matters* is designed to initiate dialogue and offer art educators important considerations regarding the meaningful alignment of art education with the field of material culture studies.

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Theoretical Perspectives on Material Culture and Art Education

Researchers across fields and disciplines understand that there is benefit to addressing issues and problems through interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary methods and orientations. One of the most promising attributes of material culture studies for the field of art education is that it exemplifies such an approach to research. As discussed in the introduction to this volume, fields and disciplines as diverse as history, the biological sciences, folklore, and art history are making significant contributions to the theory associated with material culture studies. Art educators have contributed as well. However, at present, those contributions, while important, are not as numerous as those that have emerged in other fields. This book accelerates contributions to material culture studies by art educators.

Section I of *Matter Matters* includes eight chapters by nine authors who discuss the relationship of material culture studies and art education from a theoretical perspective. The range of perspectives in this section is impressive. Jack Richardson brings attention to space and its materiality. Richard Lachapelle asks us to consider material culture as it is manifested in the landscape, the built environment, and art. Mary Hafeli connects material culture to those narratives that promote connectivity in "matter out of place."

The individual and the collective also motivate theoretical perspectives represented in this book. In this regard, Denise Baxter and Sara Wilson McKay contribute a chapter that describes the close connection between material culture and the formation of the self. Dan Serig considers material culture as it contributes to cultural identity. Three authors examine material culture as it relates to the generation, appreciation, and/or collection of artifacts. Nancy House examines contemporary art and design from a material culture studies perspective. Mark Graham's concern is with collecting material culture. His place-based education orientation when read in tandem with Serig, Richardson, and Hafeli provides additional insight into the relationship of material culture to space and place. Anne Burkhart's discussion of principles that can be brought to the study of material culture amplifies the examples she uses to illustrate her proposed principles as well as those many other examples discussed in this section and the second section of this book. In this regard her chapter is a fitting conclusion to this first section.

The Materiality of Space ■

JACK RICHARDSON

In this chapter, I argue for a consideration of the materiality of space as a productive and necessary move toward a more complex understanding of and experience through material culture. Insofar as space, in itself, is not visible, it is not primarily a visual construct; however, because space impacts one's experience (i.e., claustrophobic small and overcrowded space or intimidating and lonely empty expanses), it has an affective character—we sense our location in space. Our constant experience of its presence is not an abstraction—it has substance and form; in short, it has materiality. Among its many definitions, material culture "refers not only to the objects that we view and engage, but it also encompasses the immense array of cultural expressions that transcend objects themselves, and applies as a descriptor of all human-generated expressions and activities of a culture" (Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p. 250). When centered around the "human-generated" aspects of culture whether artifact or social behavior, space always recedes as that which is either incidental to or as a consequence of human actions. We cannot separate "things" from the spaces within which we encounter them, and it is the complexity of these relationships that exceed their discussion as primarily context, often assumed to be political, social, or ideological. Space is not simply a background or a theoretical lens through or within which to account for the meaning extracted from material objects—it is a necessary and prior circumstance that allows such critical and interpretive practice to occur. Thinking through space "allows a more subtle negotiation of the boundary between the 'real' and 'imagined,' the 'material' and 'immaterial.' Its productivity is also a function of how it helps open up a range of novel and productive ways of thinking" (Latham & McCormack, 2004). Though often felt both literally and figuratively throughout our daily experiences, space is frequently conceived as a stage upon and through which all contact with material culture is mediated rather than as a material thing in itself.

Studies of space and place within multiple fields have informed and continue to inform understandings relating to human knowledge production, identity, social organization, and the objects that compose our field of experience. This chapter will begin with a brief discussion of space as it has been taken up in various disciplines in order to link these concepts with those of spatial materiality and create a foundation for establishing the importance of spatial materiality within recent forms of contemporary public artwork. In particular, I will examine public-based art projects developed by Lucy and Jorge Orta, Michael Rakowitz, and Krystof Wodcisko. It is through art forms such as theirs that the materiality of space is revealed as the work comes to form only through the recognition, manipulation, and interrogation of the influences and effects of space in their work. Additionally, I suggest that approaching this work as material culture with space being its primary "artifact" provides a more complete and necessarily complex understanding of the implications of the work by acknowledging space as a constitutive rather than incidental material component in its conception, production, and reception. In conclusion, I will return to the work of Gilles Deleuze and his theorizing of sense as a means through which to further establish the materiality of space and affirm the value of considering it on par with other "artifacts." In essence, this chapter proposes a response to Daniel Miller's (2005) conclusion that

> objects are important not because they are evident and physically constrain or enable, but often precisely because we do not "see" them. The less we are aware of them, the more powerfully they can determine our expectations by setting the scene and ensuring normative behavior, without being open to challenge. They determine what takes place to the extent that we are unconscious of their capacity to do so. (p. 5)

SOCIAL MATERIALITY: AGENCY AND THE "THINGNESS" OF HYBRIDITY

That material culture studies examines, analyzes, and interprets things is seemingly an inconsequential and commonsense presumption. However, what may appear to be merely a statement of fact is fraught with complications, not the least of which is the question "what is a *thing*?" A basic anthropological or archeological response to such a question might be that a thing is simply an artifact that is "both tangible and lasting" (Miller, 2005). However, this does not account for more nebulous forms that might be counted as "things," such as dreams, thoughts, electronic data, or space. The theoretical foundation that makes such distinctions problematic is perhaps an overreliance on a Cartesian objectivity suggesting a separation between things "of the mind" and things "of the world," the human subject and the material object. Indeed this division sets up a convenient differentiation between a social being, animate and possessing agency, and a material thing, inert and passive. It also produces a hierarchy that reinforces the primary significance of the human agent above that of material things, that is "if an artifact holds any kind of psychological presence, it is only a secondary effect of its connection with human protagonists, the 'real' and primary agents" (Knappett, 2005). Similarly an artifact may "appear to be active [only] by virtue of its close association with living agents" (p. 29).

Agency, or the capacity to act in the world, is apparently what distinguishes human subjects from the objects and environments that surround them. However, referencing the work of the anthropologist Bruno Latour, Miller (2005) suggests "that the reality of the world consists almost entirely of a hybridity within which it is impossible to disaggregate that which is natural and lawlike and unchangeable and that which is human, interpretive, and at times capricious" (p. 11). That is, neither inanimate objects nor animate organisms independently possess a quality that could be conveniently identified as a thing, rather it is the process of accumulated, current, and future relationships among and between objects *and* organisms that can be said to be the "thingness" or material of material culture. Knappett (2005) referencing Latour suggests that agency is "conceived as a relational property, distributed across hybridized human-nonhuman networks. As a distributed phenomenon, it resides neither in humans nor in objects but in their 'intra-actions'" (p. 31). These hybrid compositions, or what Knappett calls "sociotechnical collectives," are where we might begin to understand space as possessing "thingness" and thus sufficiently "material" to be considered alongside rather than incidental to or as a consequence of the objects and persons that circulate within it.

MOBILE PLACES: FUZZY BOUNDARIES

If we accept the "thingness," or materiality, of space as represented by animated human/nonhuman hybridizations, we effectively blur the distinction between animate and inanimate forms previously held apart by an inert space. One might assume that this "animation" is primarily a metaphor describing the implicit hermeneutic operations that occur as a human subject encounters material things and not as a condition of materiality. However, one can also view this movement between as itself a material rather than conceptual aspect of space. Thus, objects, subjects, and spaces are no longer conceived as independent forms; each is constituted not through internal structure, but through processes of continuous reconfiguration. Knappett (2005), referencing anthropologist David Le Breton, suggests, "the body does not exist as a bounded entity, a locus for the individual person, but is permeable, in a state of flux with its surroundings" (p. 31). In biology, Brian Goodwin, addressing the unstable boundary that presumably differentiates objects from organisms, writes that "it is not composition that determines organismic form and transformation, but dynamic organization" (Goodwin quoted in Knappett, 2005, p. 16). Anthropologist Timothy Ingold (1988), drawing on

this dynamic construction, suggests that in biology, the object of analysis is not the isolated organism, but rather a process defined as "organism plus environment" (p. 20).

Space should not simply be considered as that which either separates or brings together various material and living forms. Rather, space is animation. Objects, the environment, and human agents produce and are produced by space through an unending negotiation of function and meaning: "We may be better off thinking about the boundary between the organism and the environment, between the animate and the inanimate, as being decidedly fuzzy in terms of both structure (composition) and organization (form)" (Knappett, 2005, p. 16). The implications of such thinking in terms of a consideration of space as a material form are immediate. That is, if no object or organism (subject) can be apprehended in isolation, then their constitution must be conceived as a process that engages both time and space as material components of their existence and thus material aspects of their composition. Within this object/space/subject hybrid something is always on the move and by including space in this configuration, it too can be conceived as having agency independent of the will of the human subject.

PLACES AS AGENTS

Generally, it is human agency applied to space that has introduced the concept of place (Hetherington, 1997). While space has largely been associated with abstract quantifiable and measurable form, place, associated with memory and familiarity, is assumed to be its meaningful counterpart. The space/place contrast has sustained much geographical discourse, which "has tended to make the material world disappear and to replace it instead with culture with all its symbolism and meaning" (p. 184). Maintaining a strong link between human actions and place tends to limit "place as fixed by subjectivity" (p. 184); a formulation that reinforces a passive/active dichotomy and locates meaning primarily in the human subject. That is, only the human subject can initiate and define relationships among things thus reconfiguring abstract space as a familiar place. It is only by deemphasizing the human subject as the sole organizing agent of a place, and reconsidering the notion of agency generally, that one can begin to recognize the reciprocal relationships that always exist between human and non-human forms in the production of space.

Grounding material considerations of space within the concept of place and referring to place as having a quality of "thingness" (material presence) aligns place simultaneously with both the static material aspects of an object and the spontaneous, idiosyncratic, mutable effects of an agent (subject). These "hybridized human-nonhuman networks" (Knappett, 2005) endow place not only with the permanence and tangibility associated with a "vulgar reduction of materialism to simply the quantity of objects" (Miller, 2005), but also with the ability to impose itself on the world, something typically associated with human agency.

It is assumed that the human agent, with the capacity for mobility, has the exclusive ability to alter and transform the object/place/subject hybrid with mute objects succumbing to the will of the subject. However, "Where material forms have consequences for people that are autonomous from human agency, they may be said to possess the agency that causes these effects" (Miller, 2005). Miller provides examples such as a computer that crashes causing the loss of data, or an illness that makes us sick. Thus, if one concludes that subjects and objects both possess the capacity to affect other subjects and objects, it is only through this reciprocal agency that either subjects or objects come to form and both have the capacity for active engagement. Neither the subject nor the object contains an essence that stabilizes their placement within place. It is an ongoing and mobile process of consolidation and dispersion that occurs as a consequence of contact with materiality in particular places and for particular durations that establishes place as a consequential and indispensible component of this arrangement. As such, place has agency with the capacity to move, affect, and combine with other material forms, including other spaces and places. "Places move around in what

has been described as arrangements or networks of heterogeneous materials (see Latour, 1988; Law, 1992, 1994) and can be seen as an ordering effect of those agents" (Hetherington, 1997).

Hetherington (1997) suggests that it is through memory that the effects of material forms on the subject can be identified. Through his reading of Gaston Bachelard's (1972) philosophical work, *The Poetics of Space*, Hetherington affirms Bachelard's contention that the poetic image of a place (for instance the memory of favorite childhood play place) is carried with the individual as "an echo of the past" (Bachelard quoted in Hetherington, p. 194). That is, the materiality of a place gives way in our memory to the recollection of the effects of that place—its intimacy, its comfort, its contribution to our sense of belonging. We carry the impression of past relationships with material places and "those relationships are brought to hand through memory and represented as the source of a sense of place" (p. 196). However, Hetherington suggests that this construction of a "sense of place" avoids the effect of the materials themselves and that Bachelard fixes agency in the human subject (memory) rather than as a reciprocal relationship. "What he shows, perhaps unwittingly, is that in this intersubjectivity, the construction of place is impossible to conceive without taking into account the translating effects of the material actants involved" (p. 194).

SOCIAL PLACES AND THE EVENT OF MATERIALITY

The public artwork of Lucy Orta, Michael Rakowitz, and Krystof Wodcisko is realized only as a relationship between social places and the material forms and processes circulating within these environments. As such, their work can be seen as hybrid compositions, or what Knappett referred to as "sociotechnical collectives." These artists engage social space/place as a material element of the work, which then functions simultaneously as both a social and an aesthetic form, which mitigates against a full apprehension of their projects as either sociopolitical or entirely within the "artworld." The work operates as a hybrid, a sort of ad hoc collective of material and immaterial forms. The places within which their work is conceived and deployed affects as much as it is affected by its presence, simultaneously disrupting and producing new spaces. The artists' conception, interpretation gives way to dynamically reconfigured and reconfiguring places activated by their work. To the extent that the work takes place as and in social space and if we grant that this configuration represents a material structure, the work can perhaps be better understood as material culture, "encompass[ing] the immense array of cultural expressions that transcend objects themselves, and applies as a descriptor of all human-generated expressions and activities of a culture" (Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p. 250) rather than primarily as a discrete or autonomous artwork.

Before moving the discussion to the artists' work, the notion of materiality needs to be implicated in conceptions of social place in that the artists' work is not an abstraction of materiality, but occurs within particular environments and social communities. Gilles Deleuze's philosophical notion of the "event" is perhaps a productive way to make this transition.

An event is not something distinct or removed from ordinary experience of social space. Rather, social space is composed by and derivative of events that produce a fluid network of interactions among people, objects, and space that in relation to one another form a loosely knit ephemeral social community. However, this is not a community understood in an anthropological sense based on ethnic or cultural commonalities or one based solely on geography. This is a community of proximity, contingency, and spontaneous relationships. In this regard, communal space is not a stable term, "It is not *the arrangement* or *organization* but the *process* of arranging, organizing, fitting together" (Wise, 2005, p. 77, emphasis in original). Furthermore, it is not a place defined primarily by the presence and influence of human agents, but rather an environment produced by the reciprocal relationships among heterogeneous forms including people, material objects, and places. It is community more properly understood as *assemblage*.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write, "We will call an *assemblage* every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow—selected, organized, stratified—in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage, in this sense, is a veritable invention" (p. 406). Paraphrasing Deleuze and Guattari, J. McGregor Wise (2005) suggests that "we do not know what an assemblage *is* until we find out what it *can do*" (p. 78, emphasis in original). Assemblage is not primarily a noun, describing a collection of objects or individuals in a particular space or territory; it is a verb accounting for the movements, dispositions, habits, rhythms, and tendencies of all concrete and organic forms interacting and reacting to each other. Assemblage represents the collective forces holding together disparate forms and objects and the potential for this multiplicity to accept or disallow the inclusion of other forms or objects: "They make the territorial assemblage open onto something else, assemblages of another type" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 510).

Assemblage describes an ongoing process of the construction of territories, or *territorializations*. "As an assemblage, a territory manifests a series of constantly changing heterogeneous elements and circumstances that come together for various reasons at particular times" (Message, 2005, p. 275). Social materiality as assemblage can thus be understood as a continuously transforming conditional structure that is "localilsable as a specific point in space and time" (p. 275). The work of the artists outlined here can be described as *deterritorializing* forces operating as the "specific point" around which an alternative territory or social place can accumulate, producing effects that realign, even if only briefly, the existing relationships/forces that have previously defined this particular point at this moment.

Lucy Orta: Places of Refuge

Beginning with a project called *Refuge Wear*, conceived in response to images she saw of displaced Kurdish refugees during U.S. invasion of Iraq in 1993, Lucy Orta began a body of work that addressed the social fabric of contemporary society through the construction of clothing often designed to function simultaneously as covering for the mobile body and shelter for the body at rest.

Social isolation occurs as a result of displacement and leads the isolated individual or community to seek refuge elsewhere; to literally transform an alternative space into a place of comfort or safety, to find shelter. At its core social dislocation—whether as a result of poverty, military invasion, or cultural migration—is a social-spatial condition as well as a socio-political circumstance. However, the result is often the same: individuals are forced to the margins of society and subsequently become invisible and are often denied both the literal security of a physical shelter and the personal emotional security acquired as a result of one's membership in a dominant communal structure. Orta's clothing, often produced from unusual or unusually bright materials, addresses these concerns by creating visibility while at the same time providing both covering and, when removed and reconfigured, shelter. "Her clothing series are therefore portable architectures, wearable objects located midway between social commitment and the post-atomic science-fiction imagination" (Pinto, 2003, p. 34). "With her artworks, she intervenes to restore visibility to that which is invisible, to bring attention to people, phenomena and things that are not usually deemed to possess the necessary appeal to become images" (p. 34).

Orta's *Refuge Wear* garments are diverse, with each article of clothing designed to correspond to the particular environment in which it will or could be deployed, responding to the dual capacity of clothing as a "skin" that establishes contact with the body and the community surrounding the body. "*Refuge Wear* takes on both of these tasks, affirming that our body is in complete and indispensable interaction with that which surrounds it" (Pinto, p. 40). As such, the clothes operate as a combination of poetic social engagement, visibility, and utility with each element functioning together to create a material spatial composition. For example, Orta's *Refuge Wear—Habitent* garment is a large silver poncho form with various pockets

sewn to the exterior that can be used to carry essential things like food, tools, etc., which can then be transformed into a small shelter through the use of small aluminum poles integrated into the design. Orta's design acknowledges both the material effects of an environment on a marginalized individual and produces another material form (the tent) for refuge and transformation. Furthermore, this transformation affects the refugee, providing a shelter where one can find solace, and the material configurations of the space around the tent, transforming the presence of the refugee within this environment, a reciprocal operation that constitutes the materiality of the work.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: Alien Space

Krzysztof Wodiczko's work often operates at the intersection of private thoughts and the public spaces in which these thoughts and often those who express them are unheard and unseen. For example, legal or illegal immigrants are frequently at the center of social and economic debates, which ostensibly are presented in public spaces reflecting open dialogue and exchange; however, the subject of these debates, the actual immigrant, is often absent from this discussion. Furthermore, when given an opportunity to speak on their own behalf "immigrants find themselves already framed and silenced" (Wodiczko, 1999). As such, public space for the Other is not simply a public context in which to express and share one's identity; it is a material assemblage of the social, political, and economic networks that compose its form, effectively and sometimes literally making invisible the alien subject. As such, it has a material form with material consequences. One's presence as an alien identity within a presumed public homogeneity becomes an event of contact that precipitates a process of arranging and rearranging the material structure of public space. In effect, an alien presence reterritorializes public space by creating an alternative assemblage or place. It is at this very point of contact between the presence of the alien individual and the material reality of public space that Wodiczko situates much of his work.

In his project *Alien Staff*, Wodiczko designed what he referred to as "a piece of storytelling equipment and a legal and ethical communications instrument and network for immigrants" (Wodiczko, 1999, p. 105). The staff resembles a shepherd's rod equipped with small video monitor positioned roughly at eye level. The screen projects a small video of the face of the person holding the staff telling his or her stories. The work diminishes both the physical and social distances between the alien storyteller and the public by attracting the attention of passersby producing a "double presence in 'media' and 'life' invit[ing] a new perception of a stranger as 'imagined' (a character on the screen) or as 'experienced' (an actor offstage, a real-life person)" (p. 104).

In the context of this chapter, one can begin to understand the spatial function of the *Alien Staff* as a territory, in line with Deleuze's conception, or an assemblage "made of decoded fragments of all kinds, which are borrowed from the milieus but then assume the value of 'properties'" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 504). An assemblage is thus composed as a collection of "bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a *collective assemblage of enunciation*, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies" (p. 88, emphasis in original). The presence of the *Alien Staff* in this social arrangement "deterritorializes" the existing arrangement producing an alternative assemblage accumulating around it and its user. The work exists as both social critique and spatial reconfiguration. As such, if we are to grant space the quality of materiality, one's perception, reception, and interpretation of *Alien Staff* should properly include an analysis of the material effects on the space produced by the presence of this work. Indeed, a subsequent interactive variant of the *Alien Staff* further engaged the physicality of the space with the inclusion of motion sensors that would trigger prerecorded story fragments (Wodiczko, 1999) thus weaving the narrative of the user into the stories of those who get close enough to set off the sensors. This new version simultaneously engages and

produces what Knappett referred to as "sociotechnical collectives." The public and reciprocal tendencies of this work produce a material realignment of communal relationships that are central to understanding the work not simply as visually or socially provocative, but as a material reconstruction of an alternative social place.

Michael Rakowitz: Displaced Place

Urban spaces provide some of the most complex configurations of space that can be imagined. Social, cultural, economic, political, and ethnic diversity exist side-by-side within an intricate matrix of architectural and civic forms. Within this complicated and fluid arena, social identity is challenging as everyone vies for some semblance of personal place within the diversity. For most, this is a matter of establishing a "home" base, a permanent residence from which to move out into the unknown and provides a sort of social umbilical cord that establishes a stable site against which to measure one's experience with the often unfamiliar multiplicity of urban life while at the same time providing a haven for retreat. For those with the means to establish such a grounded place the city can be experienced as a metaphorical antithesis of one's personal experience, a symbol of chaos against a memory of calm. However, for those whose circumstances have left them without a "home" such symbolic separation is not a possibility. For a homeless individual, city space is a material reality and a constant reminder of one's displacement. It is a materiality that involves not only tangible architectural constructions, but also the entire network of connections between, through, and among the city's inhabitants—an "affective materiality" (Latham & McCormack, 2004).

> The affective materiality of the urban is not therefore reducible to the emotional experience of the city. Rather, to speak of the affective materiality of the urban is to speak of the intensity of the relations in and through which it consists, relations that are always more than personal and are always playing out before the reflective event of thought kicks in. (p. 706)

Michael Rakowitz's project *paraSITE,* an ongoing project that began in 1998, engages the "affective materiality" of living on the street. Working collaboratively with homeless individuals in Baltimore, New York, and Boston, Rakowitz developed a series of portable and inflatable shelters that when attached to the ventilation systems already existing in the urban architecture inflated to create a temporary shelter. By directing attention away from theoretical and social discussions of urban form and its effect on homelessness, Rakowitz shifts focus to the users of that space and an understanding of the urban environment as a lived material condition.

> The shelters are produced in a way that draws upon the personal experiences and needs of each homeless user as a way to speak about the very specific circumstances that often remain invisible when designing according to cross-sections or general statistical information. (Rakowitz & Christov-Bakargiev, 2003, p. 4)

As the title of the project implies, homeless individuals live in the urban environment not in spite of the unreceptive nature of public urban space, but as a co-producer of alternative configurations of this space. "There is 'tension' between a host and its parasite, since the host endeavors to get rid of the foreign body, while the parasite employs new ways to maintain the connection with the host" (Rakowitz & Christov-Bakargiev, 2003, p. 29). While the space is constantly modified through cleaning, the institution of various laws dictating public use of space, and the construction and reconfiguration of architectural form, the homeless individual continuously adapts through movement and repurposing spatial forms. Homelessness has been described as "not only being without home, but more generally without place. Unlike movement from place to place of travel or migration, the itinerant movement of the homeless is a mode of movement peculiar to the condition of placelessness" (Kawash, 1998, p. 327).

Indeed it may be more appropriate to speak not of that lack of place, but the process of placing, which is to say an ongoing process of making and remaking place. In this regard, place is conceived not as being present or not, but rather always present in multiple forms and defined through the reciprocal relationships between the human agent and his or her material spatial circumstances. As such, homeless individuals are not victim to the spaces within which they find themselves, but agents who "permanently or temporarily exploit the energy of the host" (Rakowitz & Christov-Bakargiev, 2003, p. 8). It is important to mention that such an understanding is not meant to justify or romanticize the unfortunate conditions faced by many homeless people. Indeed, by more carefully addressing the material aspects of living without a permanent home we can perhaps move beyond socio-theoretical discussions by recognizing the material significance of the relationships that exist between a homeless individual and the materiality of urban space.

Rakowitz's pneumatic shelters represent a hybrid form and a spatial assemblage. "Assemblages create *territories*. Territories are more than just spaces: they have a stake, a claim, they express" (Wise, 2005, p. 78). A place called "home" for the homeless is not static nor does it pre-exist as a house; "It is the continual attempt to create a space of comfort for onself, through the arrangement of objects, practices, feelings and affects" (p. 79). Thus, following Deleuze and like Wodiczko's *Alien Staff*, the shelter/user/space hybrid simultaneously *deterritorializes* and *reterritorializes* the materiality of the urban environment. One can begin to understand neither the condition of homelessness nor the impact of Rakowitz's work if each element of the equation (human, home, building, sidewalk, laws, etc.) is addressed in isolation. They are always simultaneously in play, forever creating, disrupting, and dissolving connections between and among them. Their interplay constitutes a spatial event and reveals the materiality of urban space.

CONCLUSION

I began by suggesting that space possessed materiality. If considered in light of material culture studies, such a supposition broadens analysis, interpretation, and understanding to include not only tangible and visible forms and the cultural practices relating to these, but also the always already interconnected, mutable, and transformative potentials that these materials have when considered as not just part of but responsible for constituting the spaces within which they are encountered. While these relationships can be identified intellectually and theoretically, they do not, in themselves, take visible form. Again we can turn to Deleuze and his notion of "sense" as the material force that both creates and binds experience into an assemblage that occurs as an event.

Whereas assemblage presumes space as a collection of independent things with relative distances between them, events require time. That is, the relationships between things, as well as the things themselves, are always moving and transforming. Therefore, space comes to be understood not as a void within which events (or relationships) occur, but as a thing in itself composed as event. In order to characterize the event as having materiality, we ought to be able to articulate its form without reference to the objects and persons involved, which would deny the event (or the space it defines) the status of a thing by acknowledging it as only precipitating or developing as a consequence of human agency. Gilles Deleuze proposes an alternative formulation of propositions or statements of logic through an appeal to sense as something that precedes language and as such offers a theoretical foundation for the materiality of the event.

"Sense" can be understood as contact between bodies (broadly defined as both living and non-living things), an event prior to the formulation of descriptive or representational thought presented as a proposition expressing the existence of some material form or idea. For Deleuze, propositions are based primarily on representation, which rely on common sense and recognition for their understanding, both concepts that further rely on some prior

knowledge or experience. For instance the proposition, "I see a black cat" only makes sense if one has had prior understanding of the terms "black" and "cat." Deleuze's notion of sense suggests that prior to the proposition "I see a black cat" the event of contact with a particular cat is sensed prior to this articulation. Deleuze describes the logic of the proposition as a three-step process suggesting that the linguistic structure of a proposition relies on three properties—denotation, manifestation, and signification—working together "in an endless circle of self-reference" (Paxon & Stivale, 2005, p. 68). As such, a representational proposition could not describe the **event** of contact and relegates space, as event, as an incidental player in this triadic relationship. Deleuze suggests a fourth quality of a proposition, sense or "*the expressed of the proposition,*... a pure event which inheres or subsists in the proposition" (Deleuze quoted in Paxon & Stivale, p. 68, emphasis in original).

This brings us full circle back to the original proposition that space has materiality that is not easily described and perhaps impossible to articulate with traditional representational language. However, through Deleuze's notion of sense, space/place can be perceived as an affect resulting from the event of one's encounter with the materiality of space. "Sensation opens at the threshold of sense, at those moments prior to when a subject discovers the meaning of something or enters into a process of reasoned cognition" (Conley, 2005, p. 244). If sense is the operative experience of our relationship with material culture, and sense describes our experience with materiality, then we may grant space a material form. No longer can space be conceived primarily as a geometric or geographic designation (the spaces between things) or essentially the lens (context) through which we perceive the meaning and purpose behind the human act of arranging things. As a material in and of itself, it too must be considered as a thing among things, a space among spaces, a sensed presence that affects our understanding of the material world.

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The Landscape, the Built Environment, and the Work of Art: Three Meaningful Territories for Art Education and Material Culture Studies

■ RICHARD LACHAPELLE

I have been wondering for some time about the similarities and differences in viewing experiences afforded by different kinds of objects and situations. Why, for example, do I often feel as moved by landscapes as I do by works of art? I suspect that, in some ways, these encounters share similar hermeneutic features, yet I also feel that they are different somehow.

My ongoing work as a museum education researcher has focused on the viewer as interpreter of the work of art. It is from this perspective that I am proposing to extend my research beyond the walls of the art museum to include other places and objects as the potential loci of meaningful aesthetic experiences. In this chapter, I present and discuss three different territories (i.e., actual places but also spheres of action or thought) where potentially significant experiences can and often do unfold. These three territories are: (1) the landscape, (2) the built environment, and (3) the work of art.

MATERIAL CULTURE AS AN INVESTIGATIVE FRAMEWORK

Material Culture and Art Education

Before beginning this investigation of material culture studies in art education research, it is useful to remind ourselves why material culture studies, as a framework for understanding cultural objects, is of such interest for art education. Bolin and Blandy (2003) define material culture as "a descriptor of any and all human-constructed or human-mediated objects, forms, or expressions, manifested consciously or unconsciously through culturally acquired behaviors" (p. 249). They intend this definition to be inclusive so as to pertain to all kinds of artifacts, both simple and complex. However, in addition, "material culture refers not only to the objects that we view and engage, but it also encompasses the immense array of cultural expressions that transcend objects themselves, and applies as a descriptor of all human-generated expressions and activities of a culture" (p. 250). Finally, Schlereth (1990) provides a useful definition of **material culture studies** as a research method: "an investigation that uses artifacts (along with relevant documentary, statistical, and oral data) to explore cultural questions" (p. 27).

Bolin and Blandy (2003) present the following arguments in support of a material culture focus in art education. First, material culture studies is both multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary in nature. As such, it contributes to the "dissolution of many of the discipline-based barriers that have divided the academic world for years" (p. 251). Second, material culture studies is intentionally inclusive of all forms of cultural expression as it occurs in our everyday lives. As such, all "human mediated objects or expressions are [deemed] worthy of study" (p. 253). Third, material culture studies focuses not only on the role of the visual in cultural expression but also on the role of all the senses (i.e., smell, hearing, taste, touch, and sight) involved in cultural expression. Finally, as an approach to understanding culture, material culture studies is congruent with the complex, multisensory nature of our contemporary world.

The Sociosemiotics of Material Culture

To assist in my investigation of specific examples of material culture, I call upon several sources from the literature in material culture studies. However, in particular, two key theories have informed my method of analysis. Carl Knappett (2005) has proposed a research methodology in which signs are studied within networks of meanings. Knappett calls this approach the "sociosemiotics of material culture." In brief, the method consists, first, in identifying the affordances and constraints of artifacts. The term **affordances** was first proposed by the psychologist James Gibson to describe the entire corpus of potential functions of an object, including the novel and unexpected purposes to which it may lend itself (as cited in Knappett, 2005, p. 45). For example, a chair may be used for sitting but it may also be used as an improvised bookcase. The term **constraints** originates with Donald Norman who used it to describe the ways in which certain physical, logical, cultural, and semantic features of an object serve to limit or constrain the range of possible functions (i.e., affordances) of that object (as cited in Knappett, 2005, p. 52). For example, the specific shapes of puzzle pieces restrict the ways in which a two-dimensional puzzle can be assembled and, thus, the ways in which its image can be re-created.

The second step in Knappett's methodology is mainly based upon Piercian semiotics. It consists of evaluating the extended networks of objects based on semiotic relationships such as **iconicity** (i.e., relationships based on similarity), **indexicality** (i.e., relationships based on actual connections among objects usually referred to as "contiguity"), and **symbolism** (relationships based upon convention or upon a "parts to whole" connection called "factorality"). As an example of iconicity, a car that is put on display in an auto show becomes an icon in that it represents all cars in a specific category (e.g. the gas-electric hybrid car). An example of indexicality is a sign for a fishmonger that consists of the image of a lobster. The image points to the function of the shop to which it is associated. Finally, a word can function as a symbol for a particular idea. Thus, the word "cat" refers to the feline not because of any similarity between the look or the sound of the word and the animal, but because of an accepted convention within the English language (Knappett, 2005). Finally, a basic tenet in the theoretical underpinning of Knappett's approach is that, instead of the traditional dualistic Cartesian separation of **subjects** and **objects**, there exists instead a symmetry between humans and non-humans (i.e., objects) and that both can be agents or artifacts. Knappett argues that, because of this symmetry, humans actually think **through** material culture (pp. 11-34).

Material Culture as Communication

The second method that I employ in this chapter focuses on communication. Schiffer (1999), like Knappett, rejects the Cartesian dualism of subject and object. A key tenet in his approach is that in the process of communication, interactors—whether persons, artifacts, or externs (i.e., non-human interactors)—can play any role, and sometimes more than one role (sender, emitter, receiver). An **extern** is "a type of interactor which arises independently of people, such as sunlight and clouds, wild plants and animals, rocks and minerals, and landforms" (p. 122). In Schiffer's model, a **sender** "imparts information to a second interactor [the emitter] by modifying one or more its properties" (p. 125) such as, for example, its form, location, or associations. The **emitter** can be an object or an artifact (i.e., passive emitters) or a person (i.e., an active emitter) (pp. 79-80). "From emitter performances, in one or more interactor roles, the receiver obtains information through inference" (p. 122). The **receiver** "registers the performances of emitters in the reference activity and, on the basis of this evidence, constructs inferences (and forecasts) and responds. In order to play a receiver role, an interactor must have a sensory apparatus and be capable of responding" (p. 124). Furthermore, Schiffer has identified 19 different **basic communication processes** (BCPs) involving one, two, or three interactors in the roles of sender, emitter, and receiver. A BCP always includes a sender,

an emitter and a receiver. The BCPs described by Schiffer are useful in understanding how communication takes place in different situations.

Schiffer's model differs in a very significant way from more conventional theories of communication. Conventional models position the sender in a privileged role. These paradigms "tend to focus on the sender's actions and intent... and on how the sender can get the message across to the receiver." In contrast, Schiffer's "archaeologically informed theory" adopts an "uncompromising **receiver orientation**" [emphasis added] where intention on the part of the sender is not a requirement for communication[1] (pp. 62-63). For Schiffer, "what matters most is that a receiver has acquired consequential information from emissions. That is why, I submit, any theory purporting to encompass the entire range of communication phenomena must, like archaeological inference, be receiver-oriented" (p. 64).

As a research methodology, Schiffer's approach consists in using inference relying on appropriately related knowledge to extract information from objects and artifacts. "The hard evidence for fashioning inferences consists of the present-day performances of artifacts and other interactors, for these are the remnants of past behavioral systems" (p. 52). Inferences must be based on evidence that points to the "formal, spatial, quantitative and relational properties of interactors" (p. 53). As we will see later, Schiffer's model holds promise for explaining the communication process inherent in many cultural activities including artistic ones. As such, this should be an area of investigation within material culture studies of particular interest to art education.

THREE EXAMPLAR TERRITORIES OF MATERIAL CULTURE

In order to provide an illustration of material culture studies as an investigative approach, I have chosen three specific examples to serve as focal points. To sustain a discussion on the landscape as a material culture territory, I will present the example of the **Tablelands** located [in Gros Morne National Park] in Newfoundland, Canada. To foster a discussion on the built-environment as a cultural territory, I have chosen an example of 20th-century military architecture, the six World War II defense bunkers, called ***flak towers*** (or ***flakturms***), which still stand in several neighborhoods in Vienna, Austria. To investigate the work of art as a third territory of material culture, I will present and discuss Anishinabe artist Rebecca Belmore's installation and performance at the Art Gallery of Ontario titled *Wild* (2001). I have chosen these examples for simple reasons: I am familiar with all three having personally encountered them at least once. Also, all three sites have specific features that make them particularly useful as illustrations for some of the points I wish to make in this chapter.

The Tablelands: A Landscape but also a Site of Material Culture

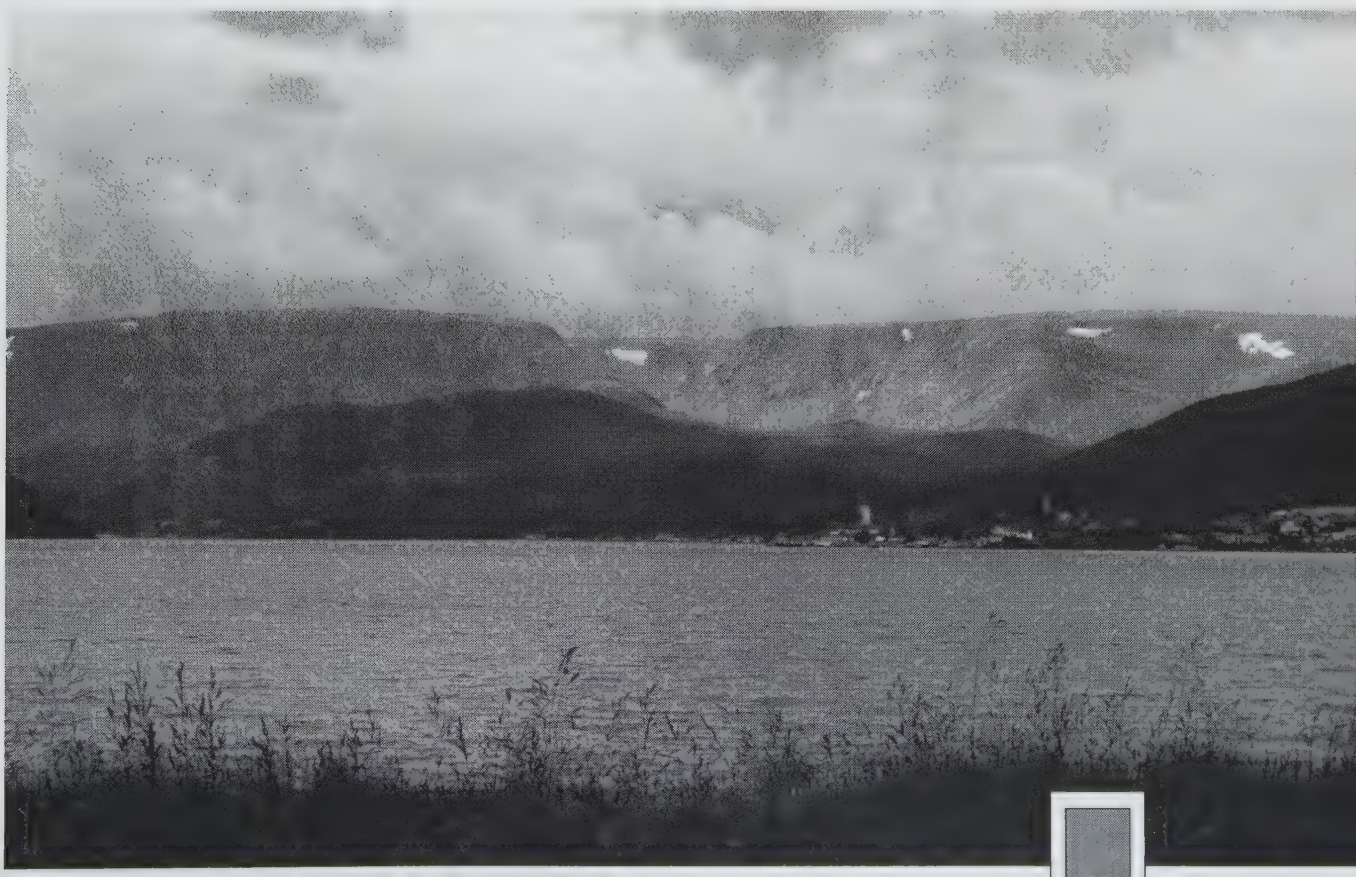
The Tablelands are located in Gros Morne National Park, near Rocky Harbour, in Newfoundland, Canada. They form a large plateau in the southern tip of the Long Range Mountains. The park was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987 since the mineralogical characteristics and geology of the Tablelands are exceptional and rare.

This mass of rock was shifted from the mantle beneath Iapetus Ocean to its present position during a continental collision some 450 million years ago. At the earth's surface this mantle rock is unstable, and weathers quickly. Its decomposition produces very unusual soils on which few plants are able to live. Flat topped and almost barren, this heap of ochre-colored rock is the single most important geological site in the park. Its scenery is so unlike anything else in the Atlantic Provinces that it almost defies description. Displaced cross sections of oceanic crust and upper mantle are not very common on the earth's surface. Where these ophiolites occur they are often strongly altered. However, the peridotite of the Tablelands is still relatively unchanged and unvegetated. The rock probably still looks fresh because it was buried beneath other sediments that protected it, and was not completely exposed to weathering until peneplanation (i.e., erosion) and later glaciation exhumed it (Burzynski, 1999, p. 151).

Natural processes almost always leave some sort of physical trace on the surface of the planet. The key features of Gros Morne National Park, including the Tablelands, were formed as a result of the process of Plate Tectonics (i.e., continental drift), erosion, and glaciation (Burzynski, 1999). Evidence of these natural processes is to be found in the various geological features of the Park and this evidence can be understood to constitute a sort of unintentional "written" record of an event inscribed into the park's geology by nature.

The Landscape as Communication

In terms of Schiffer's communication model, the Tablelands' geological features are externs. The Tableland externs play several interactor roles in the basic communication process (BCP) by which earth scientists were able to unravel the mystery of the origins of this unique landscape. In the communication process in question, the Tableland externs play two of the three BCP roles: the sender is the extern, the emitter is also the extern, and the receiver is a person (i.e., initially the scientists studying the Tablelands). According to Schiffer, this communication pattern "requires that a person infer, from an extern's emissions, something about the latter's own performance in a inscription event" (p. 99). As regards the Tablelands, that inscription event is the continental collision that occurred 450 million years ago. The extern's (i.e., the peridotite or mantle rock) performance as a sender in that event was to physically leave the earth's mantle, where it usually resides. By ending up and remaining on the earth's surface, the mantle rock plays the role of an emitter modified (through displacement) by the natural events to which it bears witness. Fortunately for us, scientists (the receivers) were able to infer, based on the extern peridotite's emissions, how tectonic plate theory accounts for the present location of the mantle rock. It was in the 1960s that geologist Bob Stevens, along with Hank Williams and other scientists from Memorial University (Newfoundland), were able to determine the origins of the Tablelands. In order to do so, they searched for evidence



VIEW OF THE TABLELANDS (GROS MORNE NATIONAL PARK, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA) AS SEEN FROM ACROSS BONNE BAY. The Tablelands are formed of yellowish peridotite and are devoid of vegetation. For these reasons, they appear lighter in this photograph than the closer forested hills that form the shores of Bonne Bay. *Photograph by Richard Lachapelle, 2009.*

A HIKER MAKES HIS WAY INTO THE TABLELANDS IN GROS MORNE NATIONAL PARK, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA. *Photograph by Richard Lachapelle, 2009.*

of the route[2] taken by parts of the Iapetus Ocean floor and the earth's mantle as it moved up and finally came to rest on the planet's surface. In doing so, these scientist provided crucial evidence to support a new scientific hypothesis at the time, that of Tectonic Plate Theory (Burzynski, 1999).

The Landscape as a Semiotic Network

Turning now to Knappett's model (2005), the peridotite rock that forms the Tablelands is a physical indicator of the area's indexical relation with the earth's mantle. Much like smoke on the horizon might signal a distant forest fire, the presence of peridotite in the Tablelands is a sign of the existence of the earth's mantle some 35 km below the earth's continental crust (Burzynski, 1999; Knappett, 2005). However, unlike the meaning of smoke, the meaning of peridotite is not easily understood. Sonesson (1989) proposed, therefore, that some indices are *abductive* and, thus, that they require "prior knowledge about a relation" before their meaning as a sign can be interpreted (p. 53). Clearly, this must be the case with the indices present in the Tablelands: Without some prior knowledge of the earth's structure and of geology in general, it is probably very difficult to even recognize the presence of these signs in the Tableland rock.

Furthermore, not everyone is as well prepared as earth scientists to "read" the geological history of the Tablelands. On their own, most visitors to Gros Morne National Park would simply be at a loss to make sense of its geological history, and most would certainly not recognize the historical significance of the Tablelands. For this reason, natural history sites enter material culture largely due to the research efforts of scientists and the scientific findings that they eventually share with us. In reality, an entire network of shared meaning begins with the scientists' research publications and then continues thanks to the efforts of agents like park naturalists and educators. Information about the geology of the Tablelands is disseminated in many ways; the avenues for doing so can vary but likely include such means as guided walks through the Tablelands, Parks Canada signage at the Tablelands trailhead, park publications, and, increasingly, the Internet. By participating in this shared communication network, all

of us can make use of scientific information to develop fuller understanding and appreciation of the importance of natural history sites such as the Tablelands.

The landscape's affordances. From the point of view of visitors to Gros Morne National Park, the Tablelands present at least the following affordances. First, the Tablelands are a place for physical activity, as visitors must hike into the Tablelands in order to see and fully experience this unique area. Second, it provides social and recreational opportunities as most visitors to the area visit with family and friends. Third, like many other exceptional landscapes, the Tablelands afford visitors with the opportunity of aesthetic appreciation. A visit to the Tablelands—hikers can walk quite some distance into a cirque within the Tablelands area—is often an unsettling experience, one that has alternately been described as a "journey to the centre of the earth," or as "stepping out onto another planet," since imagined landscapes (the Earth's core, the planet Mars or the Moon) often come to mind (Environment Canada Parks Service, 1990; Stephenson, 1991).

Aesthetics[3] and the landscape. According to Carlson (2002), "we must have knowledge of the different environments of nature and of the systems and elements within those environments" in order to aesthetically apprehend nature (p. 164). Carlson explains that "this knowledge gives us the appropriate foci of aesthetic significance and the appropriate boundaries of the setting so that our experience becomes one of aesthetic appreciation." He refers also to a point of view articulated by Sparshott, "to consider something environmentally is primarily to consider it in regard to the relation of 'self to setting,' rather than 'subject to object' or 'traveler to scene.' An environment is the setting in which we exist as a 'sentient part'; it is our surroundings" (as cited by Carlson, 2002, p. 161). It is obvious, then, that visitors experience landscapes like the Tablelands in ways which can be understood to be aesthetic.

The Flak Towers: A Built-Environment Still Rife with Meaning

Our discussion of the different territories of material culture studies continues with an example of a built-environment taken from 20th-century military architecture: the six WW II defense towers, called ***flakturms*** or ***flak towers***, which still exist and intrude on the cityscape of several neighborhoods in Vienna, Austria. As the son of a Canadian soldier and veteran who served in Europe (Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy) for most of the Second World War (1940-1945), I was simply astounded when I first came upon the flak towers in Vienna. These towers represented my first encounter with concrete evidence of the military activities and aspirations of the British Commonwealth of Nations' former enemy, the Third Reich. "Built by German forces in 1942 as defense towers and anti-aircraft batteries, these enormous concrete monoliths could house thousands of troops. So thick are their walls that any explosives powerful enough to destroy them would have a similar effect on the surrounding residential areas"[4] (Brook, 2008, p. 164). The Vienna flakturms are significant as material culture for several reasons. Ironically, they are now unwanted, yet remain as enduring and indestructible artifacts of human architectural heritage that stand dissonantly in contrast with their immediate surroundings. Constructed in a hurry (in less than 6 months) and located mainly in public parks and gardens, where space was available to house them, the flakturms soar above surrounding historic and residential buildings. They are an enduring, visual blight that stand in marked opposition to the elegant baroque former palaces and apartment buildings, and the historic gardens that surround them. The flakturms, however, bear witness to one of the most salient and unfortunate historic events of the 20th century: World War II. They serve as a constant reminder of a recent historical past marred by dictatorship, fascism, racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and military expansionism. They remind us of the folly of armed conflict and of tragic and traumatic events that we would rather forget. If anything, the flakturms are rife with meaning and deeply disturbing.

VIEW OF THE AUGARTEN L-TOWER AND ITS PRESENT-DAY SECURITY PERIMETER, AUGARTEN PARK, VIENNA, AUSTRIA. *Photograph by Richard Lachapelle, 2008.*

Built-Environment as a Semiotic Network

Affordances and constraints. The appearance of the Vienna flak towers is resolutely militaristic and, therefore, people often described them as somewhat terrifying. Indeed, they are massive, bare, concrete, and clearly industrial in nature. Their sheer materiality is overpowering and inescapable. They also appear to be out of context, as if somehow dropped into their present locations as a result of some massive blunder. One would only expect to encounter such structures in an industrial setting, certainly not in a residential area. Only war can account for the construction of such structures in an urban, residential context such as this. For all these reasons, the original affordance of the flak towers as military defensive structures still appears quite evident.

Less obvious are some of the other original affordances of the towers: they also served as air raid shelters for 15,000 civilians; each tower included large storage areas for art and cultural objects; the gun towers had hospitals with up to 800 beds; each also housed some form of armament industry (i.e., production of ammunition, engines, aircraft parts, etc.); and, finally, the flakturms also included prisons and military offices (Foedrowitz, 1998).

In terms of constraints, once again, the original design of the flak towers was largely determined by their military functions and this, in turn, has served to severely restrict and impede any alternate potential uses of the towers. Built with an extremely durable and hardened variation of reinforced concrete, the flak towers have foundations and walls 2 meters

thick and roofs 3.5 meters in thickness. Therefore, they cannot be demolished without risking serious damage to nearby buildings. The original architectural designs drawn by civil engineer and city planner Friedrich Tamms included, for obvious reasons, few entrances and windows. These design constraints still make it very difficult, even today, to reassign the towers to new peacetime uses. The Stiftskaserne tower is still maintained as an atomic-bomb shelter. The Esterhazy Park tower is now used in part to house an aquarium. Since 1994, one of the Arenberg Park towers is used as a contemporary art storage facility; this use is consistent with one of the original functions of the flak tower. However, the MAK Museum of Applied and Contemporary Art, the present-day custodian of the Arenberg tower, has plans to convert it into a facility for in-situ contemporary art installations (MAK Depot of Contemporary Art, 2008; MAK Contemporary Art Tower, www.mak.at, 2009).

Signs of symbolism and iconicity. After the end of the war, Friedrich Tamms, the architect who designed the Vienna flakturms, was quoted as having referred to the Vienna flak towers as "shooting cathedrals." In designing the structures, Tamms had carefully selected the locations of the three pairs of towers: first for military reasons (i.e., to ensure the best possible protection for the historic inner city) but also for their symbolic value in terms of the layout of the city. The Stiftskaserne flak tower was carefully located to sit on the same axis as Vienna's historic imperial Hofsburg Complex. In turn, the Augarten towers were located in Vienna's oldest Baroque garden (Foedrowitz, 1998). The intention in selecting these locations may well have been to suggest some kind of symbolic continuity or affinity between the long-lived Hapsburg reign (1300-1900) and the Third Reich.

Although the Vienna flak towers were called into service by the summer of 1944, in reality the construction of none of the towers was ever actually finished. For this reason, the flakturms were never intended to have the final appearance that they do now. The architects of these structures knew very well that it would be impossible to remove them once the war was over. "The Flak towers were supposed to be finished in the style of the medieval Hohenstaufen castles in Germany and Italy, with raw tiles and French marble lying ready in quarries near Lyon, Paris and Orleans. Its transport never took place on account of the Allied landing in Normandy" (Foedrowitz, 1998, p. 38).

Again, the design of the final appearance of the Viennese flak towers seemed intended to bring to mind iconic architectural structures from the past; these iconic references may have been intended to suggest that the Third Reich was firmly rooted in a longstanding history and that longevity was indeed its destiny. Czech architecture critic and theorist Jan Tabor, who now lives in Vienna, has compared the flakturms, in terms of their monumentality, to the Egyptian pyramids. He has also assessed their symbolic purpose in the following manner:

> Without wanting to deny the military purposefulness of these buildings completely, they were conceived from the beginning and above all as 'mood architecture'... They are monuments of and for all times. As a result, they are without utilitarian value in the usual sense. They are as useless as plastic art. But they were carriers of an idea, an elementary feeling for power, stability, and will to live. (as cited in Foedrowitz, 1998, p. 38)

Notwithstanding the symbolic meanings of the flak towers that Professor Tabor brings to light in his comments, it is likely that the construction and operation of the towers, along with an increased local presence of the military, would have functioned also as an effective sign of dissuasion intended to counter any dissent or opposition to the war among the local Viennese population.

As an example of material culture, the flak towers provide an opportunity to discuss the importance of historical context for understanding some cultural objects. However, through this example, I also want to address how the meaning of an artifact can be mediated by personal experience. When, in the present day, the person who encounters (or re-encounters) a flakturm is, in turn, a Jewish prisoner and laborer having forcibly participated in its construction, an elderly Vienna resident having lived through the rise and fall of the Third Reich, a

PLAYING IN THE SHADOW OF THE AUGARTEN G-TOWER, AUGARTEN PARK, VIENNA, AUSTRIA. *Photograph by Richard Lachapelle, 2008.*

Russian army veteran having participated in the defeat and occupation of Vienna after the end of the war, the son of a war veteran confronting an important part of his father's past, or a child who still plays everyday in the park in the shadow of one of these monoliths, the flakturms necessarily mean something different for each one of these viewers. Yet, all of these individual significations are "correct"; none of them can be rejected as somehow insignificant. In fact, when brought to light, these meanings interweave to form a widely distributed network of signification. As the generation that lived through World War II grows older and passes on, the network of meanings of the flak towers will likely become less salient and less poignant as the connection with lived experience fades and, eventually, is finally broken. Our task, then, in interpreting and understanding the flak towers will become one of remembering. "The intriguing method of **remembering**—both individually and collectively—is what we seek to understand and to nurture in history education [using objects and artifacts], whether we do it in communities, schools, or museums" (Schlereth, 1990, p. 310). In the next and final example of a locus for material culture studies, we will examine an art installation presented in the context of an historical site located within a museum.

Rebecca Belmore's *Wild* (2001)[5]: A Work of Art and a Work of Material Culture

To investigate the work of art as a territory for material culture studies, I will present and discuss Rebecca Belmore's *Wild* (2001). *Wild* is a site-specific work that intrudes upon and significantly alters our understanding and appreciation of an architectural space: the master bedroom in The Grange. The Grange is an early 19th-century residential mansion, on the site of the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) (Toronto, Canada). It has been restored and opened to the public as an AGO exhibit. Starting from the actual furniture in the master bedroom display, artist Rebecca Belmore changed, in subtle ways, the bedding that decorates a rather dominant, four-poster bed. She attached beaver pelts to the canopy in a sort of "heraldic flourish," and also topped the mattress with a "blood-red" taffeta bedcover into which long, parallel rows of straight black hair are sewn into each seam of the quilted counterpane. Belmore's "adjustments so skillfully folded into the existing Victorian décor and conventions of museum display that it was unclear where her intervention began or where it ended. Many visitors came and went unaware that something was amiss. This lack of recognition speaks as much to the skillful blending of signifiers as it does to the inherited authority of historical displays" (Ritter, 2008, p. 56). However, Belmore, an Anishinabe woman, also occupied this bed at various times over a period of five days. Each time, she lay naked under the bedcover, simply resting. Most often, visitors overlooked Belmore as they passed through the exhibit. "By taking possession of the most intimate room of the house, the master bedroom, she made visible a forgotten (or, systematically erased) history: that of the Aboriginal people who originally occupied the land. *Wild* is on the one hand a comment on this contested history and, on the other, an indulgence of a fantasy of social (and political) transgression—the desire to occupy the master's house" (pp. 56-57).

Affordances, constraints, and sign-values. This installation and performance by Rebecca Belmore provides for an interesting discussion of the affordances, constraints, and sign-values of the objects featured in this installation and performance. When the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) re-opened the Grange residence in 1973 as a museum exhibit, the Grange building and furniture migrated from one object register to another, that is, from a functional to a significative register. While, initially, the furniture was obviously used by the Boulton and Smith families (the inhabitants of The Grange) as utilitarian objects (i.e., chairs were used for sitting and beds for sleeping), the museum now resorts to physical and other constraints (i.e., rails, ropes and signs) to prevent visitors from using the furniture in these very same ways. The Grange and its furniture has changed in status to become that of icons representing a certain way of life at a specific period in the history of the City of Toronto (Gray, 2001).

In terms of affordances, what sense can we make of Rebecca Belmore's performance? Have her actions uncovered new affordances? Have they produced new sign-values? Or, instead, by reclining in the poster bed of the master bedroom, has Belmore caused the master bedroom and its objects to return to their initial register as functional objects? Not quite. I would argue instead that the artist's actions have resulted in yet another re-assignment of the room and its furniture: this time, to an entirely new register, that of the work of art. What, then, are the affordances of this and other works of art? Works of art do have some practical uses: For example, a painting can be used to decorate a room or, in some cases, to hide imperfections on a wall. Admittedly, the functional affordances of a work of art, while not entirely inexistent, are relatively limited and, therefore, we must conclude that the principal affordances of a work of art are not pragmatic but significative. Each potential interpretation of the work of art is, therefore, to be understood as one of its significative affordances.

Belmore's installation and performance in *Wild* (2001) are rich in sign-values. For example, the significance of Belmore's use of beaver belts relies upon the iconic appearance of heraldic flourishes while, at the same time, through the use of indexicality, points to the tumultuous history of the fur trade in French and British colonies in North America. In terms of symbolism, the bed suggests many possible meanings, key among them the meaning of sexual intimacy and perhaps, sexual exploitation. The quilted bedcover indexes notions of warmth and comfort but also points to the popular tradition of quilt making as a record of familial history. Therefore, we might ask exactly whose family history is represented here? In addition, the blood-red taffeta and the black hair of the bedcover seem to symbolize some sort of trauma suggesting, perhaps, that the comfort of some comes at the cost of others. Belmore's passivity, as she lay resting in the bed during the performance component of this work, symbolically suggests both submission (since she seems to offer no resistance) and defiance (since she appears so comfortable and self-assured). We feel that, somehow, she should seem awkward in such a setting and, yet, she doesn't. In the context of this work, Belmore, herself, has become an icon—she stands in for all native peoples exploited over the centuries in the name of colonialism. In a sense, *Wild* briefly encapsulates a searing point of view of the history of relations between European settlers and North American native peoples.

> I wish to rest my weary body in the master's bed. The bed has an autonomous quality that I find extremely attractive. The bed is a fortress. The four posts clearly marking its territory. Its canopy offering protection from the powers that live in the sky. It has become my shelter.... To lie in this historic bed covered in a mass of hair is evocative of a time when the newcomers to this land viewed us as wild. The decorative fur detail of the canopy refers to the taking and taming of this 'wilderness.' My black hair is a celebration of survival. (Belmore, 2001, p. 83)

The artwork as a communication network. Returning once again to Schiffer's model of basic communication patterns, the exchange[6] that occurred between Belmore and visitors to the AGO during the exhibition of her work would have involved a person in the sender role (the artist), a work of art in the emitter role (*Wild*, 2001), and a person in the receiver role (an AGO visitor). This is Schiffer's Basic Communication Pattern (BCP) no. 2. This pattern best explains what happens in terms of communication when a viewer encounters a work of art. Interestingly, this same BCP pattern also describes the communication that occurs when someone encounters one of the Vienna flak towers (the second example presented in this chapter). In the latter case, the Third Reich's architect is the sender, the flak tower is the emitter, and the viewer is the receiver. However, returning now to the very first case in point—the Tablelands—the communication pattern that we identified there was different: of the three instances examined, it is the only one where an extern plays one or more interactor roles within the communication process. In this regard, it is unique and distinctive. However, does the apparent equivalence in communication patterns between the other two

examples—the flak towers and Belmore's *Wild*—signal that, when it comes to artifacts and works of art, there are no real features that distinguish these encounters one from the other?

Well, I may have identified two differences. For the time being, these are tentative findings that will require additional research in order to support or refute them. Nonetheless, for the sake of discussion, I will briefly present them here. The first difference concerns the affordances of the two types of emitters. While both an artifact and a work of art can be the locus of aesthetic interpretations, the primary affordances of an artifact are pragmatic; their aesthetic affordances are often secondary in importance. The Vienna flak towers are a good example of this: they were called into service as soon as they became functional even though the exterior cladding of the towers, essential as performative indices symbolically linking the towers to the medieval Hohenstaufen structures, was never completed. The flak towers were used first and foremost as defensive bunkers and their communicative potential was never fully realized; in fact, this potential was actually sacrificed for practical reasons. In contrast, the primary affordances of the work of art are aesthetic: the work of art exists principally as an intricate network of potential aesthetic interpretations. In almost every case, any pragmatic affordances of the work of art (i.e., as decoration) are secondary in importance to its aesthetic affordances.

The second difference concerns the motivations of both the sender and the receiver in the process of communication. In the case of an artifact, receivers may disregard any symbolic or aesthetic features of an emitter to respond mainly, if not sometimes exclusively, to the pragmatic affordances of the object. For example, we often use chairs without ever taking notice of their particular design features. That is, the functional aspects of an artifact often overwhelm any aesthetic features.

After reviewing arguments by Danto, Gell, and Genette, Knappett summarizes that "the viewer confronted with an artwork seeks to understand the nature of the agency behind its creation" (2005, p. 127). That is, in the case of a work of art, the artist's (i.e., the sender's) motivation[7] is to transmit, via a work of art (i.e., the emitter), a message that has aesthetic form and significance. In turn, the viewer (i.e., the receiver) must intentionally reciprocate with similar motives by interpreting the emitter using the same register of aesthetic significance. That is, both sender and receiver must be correctly aligned in terms of the aesthetic significance of the object in question. I call this alignment, this meeting of minds between sender and receiver, **mutual aesthetic motivation**. That is, in the case of an art encounter, the viewer as the receiver must adopt the appropriate attitudinal disposition in order to respond aesthetically to the work of art.

Admittedly, viewers may not always respond to a work of art in this way. However, this problem is not unique to works of art. In understanding or appreciating any object, appropriately related knowledge—Schiffer (1999) refers to this knowledge as **correlons**—is required before the receiver can make inferences about the object in question. "I submit that skillful performance requires a receiver to employ a different set of correlons, and thus generate different responses, for each place, activity, interactor and interaction. Thus, every combination of categories call forth a corresponding—perhaps unique—set of correlons and thereby yields more or less tailored responses" (p. 77). Therefore, in the absence of the appropriate relational knowledge, it is sometimes difficult to recognize what type of a response may be appropriate in any given situation. For such reasons, receivers may respond inappropriately in certain situations. Finally, such occurrences underscore the role of education in assuring that receivers acquire the appropriate skills for inferring meaning from historical landscapes, artifacts, and works of art.

CONCLUSION

As an exemplar of a territory for the appreciation of material culture, the Tablelands have provided the basis for a discussion of human-mediated cultural experience. This discussion addressed nature as a site of aesthetic experience, the landscape as the vehicle for ideas and representations about the geological history of the planet, the role of communication and scientific inference in understanding natural environments, and the ways in which information of a scientific nature can enhance visual and cultural experiences. As a second example of material culture, the Vienna flak towers provide an opportunity to discuss the importance of historical context for understanding some cultural objects. However, through this example, I have also addressed how the meaning of an artifact is also mediated by personal experience. Finally, Rebecca Belmore's *Wild* provides a fertile ground for several different yet complimentary interpretations with meanings that enrich and build upon one another. My discussion of this work attempted to emphasize this point. It also addressed the communicative dimension of the work of art as a territory where dialogue(s) between artist and viewer, museum and visitor takes place.

In conclusion, this chapter serves to illustrate how material culture studies might be useful to the field of art education. Material culture studies make it possible to position art practices within the broader context of human cultural experience considered as a whole. Rather than continuing to define the arts as somehow distinctive and, therefore, separate and isolated from other cultural practices, material culture studies can potentially bring the arts into the arena of everyday life. Material culture studies reveal how works of art are similar in many ways to other objects of material culture. However, as a research method, material culture studies also have the potential to identify how specific examples and specific categories of human-mediated material culture, such as landscapes, artifacts, and art, might be understood as unique in some key ways while, nonetheless, firmly interwoven into an extended network of cultural meanings. As long as art educators don't lose sight of visual art as a key focus within art education teaching or research, then much is to be gained by teaching and promoting an understanding of the ways in which art is an integral part of human culture and how, in turn, that culture is largely defined by a material practice in which objects are significant conveyors of meaning.

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ENDNOTES

1 Schiffer provides the following example of unintended communication by a sender. By walking through a neighborhood at mealtime, strollers (receivers) can infer from the smell of the cooking food (emitters) that escapes through kitchen windows what each family may be eating for supper. Those cooking the food (i.e., the senders) never intended to share this information but communication occurs regardless (1999).

2 Stevens traced the upward journey of the tablelands by locating chromite particles in the sandstones at Lobster Cove Head (Burzynski, 1999).

3 In using the terms *aesthetic* and *aesthetic experience*, I am not referring to any philosophical ideas of beauty. Rather, I am referring to certain behaviors on the part of the viewer that can lead to a heightened state of consciousness. Beardsley (1982) proposes that aesthetic experience has the following features: (1) the viewer intentionally focuses their attention on an object or a specific experience; (2) everyday concerns are set aside and give way to a feeling of freedom; (3) the viewer experiences a certain detached affect which result is a loss of self-awareness; (4) the viewer engages in a process of active discovery that he or she finds pleasurable; and (5) the viewer experiences a feeling of wholeness and connectedness. Based on this definition, aesthetic experience is certainly a feature of art appreciation, but it can also be found in many everyday activities including encounters with nature. Aesthetic experiences, then, take place when a person willingly adopts certain attitudinal dispositions that predispose her or him to these heightened states of awareness.

4 Flak towers were built in Berlin (6 towers) and Hamburg (4 towers) as well as Vienna (6 towers). After the war, the Allies attempted, with limited success, to destroy them. In Berlin, the towers were "made invisible through small partial explosions, removals, and covering with earth." The results were "bunker hills" which are still evident today. The northern part of the Humboldthain gun tower in Berlin still remains as a memorial officially dedicated on October 28, 1990. The rest of the tower was destroyed forming another bunker hill. In Hamburg, the two control towers have been destroyed but the two gun towers remain. In Vienna, the urban locations of the towers prevent their removal and all six towers still exist (Foedrowitz, 1998, p. 3, p. 23).

5 Readers may view images of Rebecca Belmore's *Wild* (2001) at the following website address: www.rebeccabelmore.com/exhibit/Wild.html

6 To the best of my knowledge, during the performances that accompanied the installation, Rebecca Belmore did not engage museum visitors in any discussions about her work. The performance was a silent one. The exchange that we are referring to here is the aesthetic dialogue that occurs between a viewer and the work or art. In most cases, this dialogue takes place in the absence of the artist. However, in her role as the creator of the work of art, the artist nonetheless plays the interactor role of sender.

7 To be clear, I am not referring here to the modernist concept of *artist's intention.* In many sender-oriented models of communication, this notion is often used as a standard for judging the correctness of viewer interpretations by comparing them to an artist's statement about his or her work. From a receiver-oriented perspective (i.e., Schiffer, 1999), the receiver's performance in responding to an object is the privileged focus of communication studies. "In the present theory, however, the sender role cannot be privileged because it depends, ultimately, on the receiver's ability to infer the interactor responsible for a particular inscription event. Without a designated receiver, there can be no sender because the sender is a product of the receiver's inference" (Schiffer, 1999, p. 80).

The Intimate Chatter of Storied Objects: Aesthetics and Connectivity in "Matter Out of Place"

■ MARY HAFELI

How do materials speak in an artwork and what do they have to say? This chapter traces the conceptual evolution and material fabrication of *Weathering*, a 38-ft. wall installation of reclaimed objects and original drawings I created in the summer and fall of 2008. An art-based research project, the chapter is a collage of text and photographs. Its purpose is to juxtapose writing and images related to the gathering, fabrication, sorting, and reading of individual objects with selected theories and other inquiry into material culture and the process of making art. The project also explores meanings and relationships made possible in the conversational and reslational space that emerges as objects are deliberately juxtaposed, positioned and repositioned, "pinned down," and composed.[1]

The chapter's form and content intentionally mirrors the collage sensibility of the installation itself. Photographs of the artwork and its parts, and related image-based sources, are combined with different kinds of writing—theoretical, philosophical, memoir, pragmatic, and notational. All of these texts are presented through various visual and syntactic forms. "Collage writing"[2] of this type, rooted in the visual arts, has over the past 20 years emerged as a legitimate form of scholarship in the theory, practice, and pedagogy of writing (Elbow, 1994, 1997, 1998) and qualitative research (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997).[3] In using collage as a conceptual and analytical tool and presentational approach to interpret and theorize *Weathering*—itself essentially a collage—the medium becomes the chapter's form as well as its content.

MINING (1997)

One sweltering summer day 12 years ago, Renée Darvin took some friends on a mid-week trip to a remote, Brooklyn beach. Dead Horse Bay, a place from her childhood. "My cousin will meet us there," she said. "He knows the path."

We drive from Manhattan to collect Renée at her home in Brooklyn. From the heavily treed neighborhood filled with stately brownstones, we travel through strip mall haven, past industrial complexes to, finally, deserted land and a parking lot just north of Floyd Bennett Field.

We're out in the middle of nowhere, at a former naval airfield. We wait a while and there comes Renee's cousin pulling into the lot. He jumps out of his car, smiling and laughing, hugging each of us. So excited to lead our expedition to this special place. Memories of adventures long past.

Single file, we're a scout troop on a hike in the urban wilderness tramping through the woods. Dirt path lined with trees shifts to sand path and brush. It's hot—asphalt hot, flies buzzing, sun and sand hot.

We arrive at the beach.[4]

FIGURE 1.
Dead Horse Bay.

Sudden, welcome breeze. Spectacular swath of sand and brush. As promised—the real reason we're here—the beach is strewn with detritus washed ashore and embedded in the sand. Look, there's a jewel right in front of you, glistening wet. Other times you have to mine for treasures. A glint, a hint, a seductive sparkle, encrusted rust. What is that thing? Now celebrated as a beach find—a "found" object—this yellow shard to my right with brown and black splotches is from a Fiesta®Ware cup that once held someone's morning coffee, probably sometime in the late '30s.[5] Toys, broken dishes, a green glass juicer, a Coke® bottle shard. Hardware parts. Dumped or forgotten items transmogrified into something other by the etching of sand, the bleaching of salt and sun, the dark staining of chemical pollution.

FIGURE 2. Dead Horse Bay Beach Detritus.

For two hours I fill paper grocery bags.

Later, at home, everything is placed in the sink and washed with Dawn®.

The pieces lay to dry. Then piled again in the bags, sand removed.

I know I will do something with each of these objects.

Someday.

REVALUING

Saving selected no-longer-needed items from my own life—but more so, scavenging for other people's cast-offs—is a habit. I have been doing this for 30 years. Other artists collect found materials for their work and use them for various purposes; their artistic and conceptual intentions, procedural working strategies, and project outcomes are diverse. For example, among many ecologically minded artists[6] are the "garbage girls," named by Lippard (1995, p. 258). "Garbage girl" Betty Beaumont's *Cable Piece* (1977)[7] uses 4,000 feet of military surplus iron cable set in an 80-acre tract of land to create a 12-inch wide, circular footpath. The work, in Beaumont's words,

> is slowly burying itself. The strands of cable have begun to deteriorate. The effect of the iron content on grass growth over the years is being monitored through infrared photography. As a circle goes on forever, *Cable Piece* will become a lush growth ring, a kind of formal garden. This quiet monument in Macomb, Illinois, acknowledges the passing of an industrial age while contributing to an ecological era. (Beaumont, 2009, ¶ 3)

> LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD
> AND I AM A MATERIAL GIRL
> YOU KNOW THAT WE ARE LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD
> AND I AM A MATERIAL GIRL
> *(recorded by Madonna Ciccone, 1984; written by Peter Brown and Robert Rans)*

What is so alluring about gathering other people's cast-offs and putting them to use in, or as, art? My interest in reclaimed objects as studio materials, while tangentially related to "living green," centers more on the ways in which aesthetic and associative ecosystems evolve when disparate things create a visual and material life together in a work of art. Intrigued by multiple aspects of materiality,[8] and to the sensory and connotative characteristics of the objects themselves, I relish the hunt for items to use. I consider formal qualities; the vestige, narrative, and semiotic skins of an object's past lives; and the temporally induced "weathering"

transformation (and deformation) of its shapes and surfaces. I am also interested in the ways in which the objects I find may be further altered and, beyond that, in their role as catalysts for the creation of related drawings, paintings, constructions, and digitally produced images.

Describing his own search for materials to "reclaim" for use in the installation *False Ceiling*,[9] a massive work that meticulously suspends hundreds of "found" books to hover just over your head, Richard Wentworth explains:

> I spent a lot of time in markets, one in particular in Berlin where you would find Russian army fatigues mixed up with American army fatigues, and amongst all of this would be boxes and boxes of china and books, and the books would be socialist manuals, out-of-date technical West German books, all the stuff that has apparently lost its meaning, but is waiting for others—like myself—to revalue them. Perhaps the central irony is that you simultaneously know that those books belonged to somebody, they may even reveal that because they may say something inside. There is a sense that someone laboured to make this thing, that it has fallen and this is its last chance to be reclaimed. (Wentworth, in Furlong 1995, ¶ 2)

Wentworth's characterization of the objects he uses as "fallen" and "waiting"[10] is conceptually layered. *Fallen* has multiple meanings in the process of collecting, interpreting, and re-presenting objects artists claim for purposes other than those originally intended by their makers and owners. When I am out walking, for example, I scan the ground for objects that have physically, literally, fallen to rest on the street and sidewalk—or beach—surfaces below. *Fallen down*, gravitationally, these objects are crushed, de-formed, and re-formed by automobile, truck, and foot traffic. They become dirty, they disintegrate and dissolve. They are, in a seductive sense, materially exotic, fetishized "other." Trash, in the eyes of the sanitation department. Treasure to me. The things I collect are fallen in other ways—they have *fallen out of use* and often *fallen from grace*. Their physical qualities, like those of the yellow Fiesta® cup stained black in parts from dump gases and chemicals, are considered "unclean." The once bright, sunny ceramic cup for the everyday ritual morning coffee has been demoted to derelict detritus on a beach.[11]

FIGURE 3. "Matter Out of Place."

In a sense, these lost or cast-off items are *waiting*, back to Wentworth's[12] characterization—to be collected and moved to another dumping ground when the street or beach is cleaned. Or to be "found" and redeemed, re-purposed. The inky blotch on the yellow cup shard and the visually intriguing deterioration and deformation of other fallen items embodies the "aesthetics of garbage" in what Robert Stam (1998, ¶ 8) called "the strategic redemption of the low, the despised, the imperfect, and the trashy."[13] An unlikely aesthetic transfiguration of these materials from dirt and detritus to studio media and, potentially, art displayed in a gallery changes our eyesight as we consider garbage as something "other." The culturally perceived tension between order and disorder—a phenomenon that anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966, p. 50) named "matter out of place."[14]

STORYING

By having things in the studio, and if there's enough of them, it raises it to the level to which they might tap me on the shoulder and go, "Psst. Did you notice that I've been sitting next to so and so?

And when you were out of the room, I spoke to so and so." I need that. Those processes are contained within the performance of the work.

—Richard Wentworth (in Horodner, 2001, ¶ 22)

"What makes an object evocative?" asks Sherry Turkle (2007, p. 307), in a book of essays on familiar objects and the theories that "defamiliarize" them. For Turkle, "as theory defamiliarizes objects, objects familiarize theory." She hopes that "theory itself will become an evocative object" (p. 307) by telling us "stories about the objects in our lives" (p. 326). Taking a different tack, Brown (2001) wrote:

> Is there something perverse, if not archly insistent, about complicating things with theory?... Why not let things alone? Let them rest somewhere else—in the balmy elsewhere beyond theory. From there, they might offer us dry ground above those swirling accounts of the subject, some place of origin unmediated by the sign, some stable alternative to the instabilities and uncertainties, the ambiguities and anxieties, forever fetishized by theory. Something warm, then, that relieves us from the chill of dogged ideation, something concrete that relieves us from unnecessary abstraction. (p. 1)

Brown goes on to "theorize things." But, he suggests, in the process of examining material culture the lives of the objects we study needn't be frozen by words, pummeled with abandon, or abstracted to the point of non-recognition. Theory doesn't necessarily need to critique, to bully, to interrogate, or to render lifeless the things it tries to explain. Things and their meanings can be interpreted through the lens of "comfort" (Miller, 2008) and domestic "meaning" (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Instead of troubling and problematizing theory can empathize and sympathize—through explicating, not obfuscating—the domestic attachments things have to their owners and owners to their things.[15] For what makes objects evocative necessarily depends not only on the thing-ness of materials and objects but also on the person-ness of those who are drawn to them, who dwell on and with them, who collect them, who refuse to give them up or throw them away. As Goodman (1978) wrote about "properties that matter" in artworks, "I think there is an answer to the question; but to approach it we'll have to drop all this high-sounding talk of art and philosophy, and come down to earth with a thud" (pp. 62-63).

Still, the "thingliness"[16] even of something as common, worn out, and unassuming as, say, driftwood—and people's drive to collect it beginning in the mid-part of the 20th century—can be theorized: "To a postwar world struggling to get back on its feet, it was only natural that driftwood should metaphorically stand for and symbolize the displacement and wreckage that the world had witnessed and survived" (Bourdon, 1965, p. 27). Theorizing "things," all kinds of things, has a long history.[17]

FIGURES 4, 5, AND 6. *Weathering* Materials.

ORDERING

August, 2008. I am in the studio surrounded by hundreds of objects collected from streets, beaches, alleys, and dumpsters. The driftwood, ironically, was not picked up on a beach walk but purchased on eBay. There are small, mixed media drawings on vellum made in response to some of these things and mounted on thick blocks and thin sheets of frosted and clear Plexiglas. They are inspired by what is visible of the layers of decay and decomposition found on many of the objects. The drawings glow as light passes through their translucent materiality. They, too, are fugitive.

I am working on an installation that will be exhibited in 2 months. I have a wall. I'm wondering where to begin.

In a production sense this is "work" because I am making "a work" but in a process-based or procedural sense, it's leisure. Play. As Certeau (1984) wrote about this perceived divide, "sly as a fox and twice as quick, there are countless ways of making do" (p. 29). Here, in the studio filled with objects about to become "art," there are endless ways of making **things** do.

First, I pull everything out to see what I have to work with. I am, unapologetically, in love—aesthetically—with the objects themselves. Their skins are faded and mottled, some rusted to the point of dotted voids in once solid surfaces. They are beautifully composed in their decomposition. Then there are the stories just beneath these surfaces and the stories that have been rubbed away through use and decay. Talking quietly to each other, in small groups, and whispering across the table and floor, they're also telling their stories to me. What to say back to them? What to say with them? How to enter into a conversation that has already begun—that, in fact, began long ago?

Sorting seems to help. Laying things out in categories. Coding by degree of transparency, by linearity, color, size. Considering ideas these objects may suggest, impressions they make or leave. Questions they ask. Considering function beyond visual appearance and other sensory qualities. Can this thing hold other things? Should these bits of clear broken glass go into this red mesh bag that used to hold tomatoes in the grocery store?

JOINING, INSERTING, PAIRING

Through fluid rearrangement and play I see how things might go together. Or not, which is usually more interesting. A sun and salt bleached snarl of once-neon fishing line and a Shrinky Dinks ink jet print invent their own logic as I juxtapose them, first side-by-side then stacked, constantly adding new items to the mix and moving everything around, endlessly. I cast in resin a fragment of a decayed, transparent, yellow plastic coat hanger. Neo-amber. An ink drawing, an old, tarnished, silver creamer. A red and white swirled plastic Fun Flower, cast yesterday in a Thingmaker, a toy I had when I was 10. All of these things together making sense precisely because they don't make sense.

What to make of Wentworth's theory about materials speaking to one another when I'm out of the room? Given the composition of this assorted vintage and present day flotsam and jetsom, their antics and chatter (with a nod to the metonymy in Tom Waits' *The Piano Has Been Drinking*, 1976) might go something like this:

The drawing has been sneaky
Spying at night
The Coke bottle's tipsy, needs a seat
And the driftwood says
"Not me—why not plexi?"
The inflatable clown's flat as a pancake
And the wooden blocks are fading
"Up against the wall," says the drill to the screw
"Or that plate's gonna get hammered"
The rope needs a break, undoes her braid
As the sparkling glass gets edgy
Violets lay low, hard pressed to find cover
The light spins around and picks up a sound
The drawing has been sneaky
But the resin's catching on

I begin to attach things to the wall, starting with one small grouping of objects—drawing, shelf, broken bottle, old kitchen utensil, clump of chicken wire, translucent plastic tier of branches from a tabletop Christmas tree.

We had this same tree when I was a child in the '60s. I used to decorate it with tiny ornaments—my special job at holiday time, given to me by my mother. A family memory now recast as flower, or star if you wish, in a sprawling artwork 40 years later. From psychic "home" to gallery. Same object—different time, different location, different job.

Matter out of place.

In what sense do we absorb material objects? In what sense are they absorbed by us? McCreight (2005) writes:

> We usually use absorbent materials as shortlife vehicles to transport something from one place to another. We wipe up a spill on the counter, take the sponge to the sink, and squeeze it out. We don't worry about our snow soaked mittens, because we'll toss them in the sink or bathtub and the melting ice won't make a mess. We're used to absorbing objects in that way. But I wonder if we take full advantage of the other kind of absorption that goes on in the life of objects. Rosebud.[18] (p. 78)

McCreight, again:

> [T]hink of the rediscovered toy. You hadn't thought of it in years, then see it at a flea market. What is it? A boardgame, or a doll, or cap pistols in tancolored plastic holsters, or a childsize kitchen, or a rubber sword, or a sheetmetal dump truck, or a potholder loom. You buy it, of course. It is an artifact of historical dimensions. It is comfort in a changing world; a familiar face seen across a room crowded with strangers, suddenly precious to you. Of course you bought it, and you cannot explain why. (p. 46)

In the studio, composing the piece on the wall, I am aware that, like Margaret MacIntyre Latta (2001) and John Berger (1974) before her, this work "is not beginning now" (Latta, 2001, p. 47). The objects—the markers and anchors they have now become—bring a narrative from their own lives previous to becoming my things and entering into my narrative. And although I have been contemplating each one for some time—many for years wondering how and when I might use it—they are, in a sense, not mine at all. John Muir (1988) wrote in 1911, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."[19] The work and its process are in part necessarily about the web formed out of the time and place of things, about their connectivity to which Muir refers. The effects

of time also create a texture or patina through which the physical, sensory, connotative, and associative skins of individual, commonplace objects are exposed. Things are dis-placed, placed, and re-placed; reconstituted and recontextualized; decomposed and recomposed—to be re-experienced as something else altogether.

Although things are physically displaced they are never fully free of their histories, their "hitch" to other things that have surrounded them over time. That surround them still. They will never be just of "this" time. I may have mined them, but they will never be "mine."

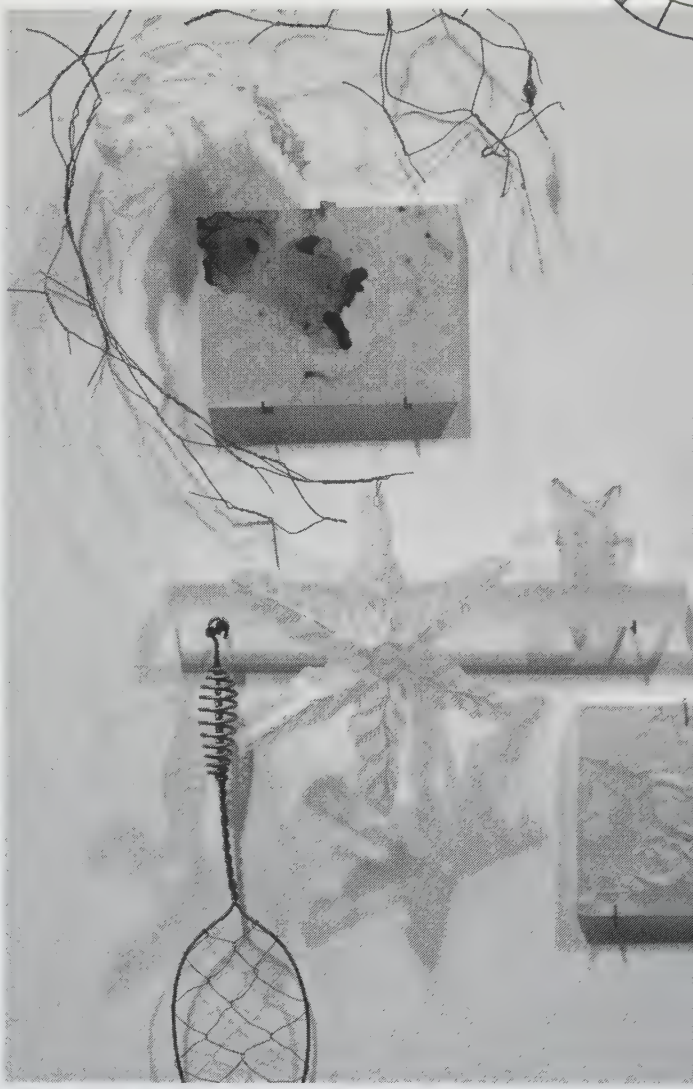
> And what does the inscription say?
> Along the rim the severe
> concepts are worn to a ghostly
> lustre. You can't fit 'love'
> into the structure you imagined
> and even the most common objects,—
> the cracked cup, the armchair
> stand off at some distance
> shrouded in a spurious
> mystery, refusing
> to come in as if they wanted
> to be part of some very
> picturesque mythology for which
> you patently don't possess the key.
>
> *—John Ash, from "Severe Concepts," 1984*[20]

PLACING

In constructing the work, I find that what is key is not possessing the key. The recontextualized home for these objects involves "placing" on many levels, so there doesn't need to be a key. In fact, a key would ruin everything. Once again, things and their intimate chatter inside this home, this world I am creating, bring their own rationale. They form a conversational—as well as a physically and sensorially material—space and place.

Tuan's (1977) writing about "home" and its "places" and "paths," and the movement made possible therein, makes sense here within the context of creating smaller homes within a larger world, piece by piece:

> In the home pieces of furniture such as a desk, an armchair, the kitchen sink, and the swing on the porch are points along a complex path of movement that is followed day after day. These points are places, centers for organizing worlds. As a result of habitual use the path itself acquires a density of meaning and a stability that are characteristic traits of place. The path and the pauses along it constitute a larger place—the home. While we readily accept our home as a place we must make an extra effort to realize that smaller places exist within the home.[21] (pp. 181-182)



FIGURES 7 AND 8. *Weathering*
Details.

FIGURE 9 (RIGHT).
Weathering Detail.

FIGURE 10 (BELOW).
Weathering.

ATTACHING

September, 2008. Attaching—yet another concept with layered meanings and functions. In the studio, I am "attached" to these objects. By psychic associative forces at play, they attach themselves to each other. Not only by way of their proximity but also in the ways in which that distance is read by anyone who encounters them as a deliberately composed collection of "stuff."

So often overlooked is the physical sense of attaching. The actions—piercing, drilling, hammering, gently tapping, pushing into "place." Then there are the attaching agents, material objects in themselves. What to use for this wisp of white plastic garbage bag dipped in polyurethane? This green wooden block? This "drawing" on baking parchment featuring a pattern of brown oil blot residue from the zucchini fried last night? This clear Plexiglas shelf that will ultimately hold a pile of green and blue glass shards?

Nails, screws, brads, clear and steel push pins, aquamarine and lemon yellow glass-topped sewing pins, blue tack, plate hangers, wire, museum wax, shelf brackets, L-nails, hooks, plant hangers, Velcro.© Each carries a different set of connotations.

To suspend, dangle, affix, recede, extend, embed? To see or not to see? Camouflage or peacock? Conceal or reveal? Precarious, ephemeral, secure, floating, or stuck? It all adds up in the overall scheme of things.

STATING

State—a way of being, a stage or form, a condition. *We need to know the state of things before we can move forward.* Stating as declaring. The ultimate act of "pinning down."

Ann Lovett, a photographer, and I are collaborating on a series of encaustic works based on digital images we shot of ancient glass vessels in the collection of The Art Institute of Chicago. We were drawn to the stunning surfaces of these small bottles and bowls, which paradoxically owe their rainbow color and much of their iridescence to the decay that comes with being buried for over a thousand years. In this process of deterioration, known as "*weathering,*" slow decomposition produces thin films of transparent incrustation on the surface of the glass, leaving a shimmer and brilliance coveted by collectors but wholly unintended by the artist who originally produced the work.

My work explores weathering as it happens in the present, on and among objects whose histories reflect a less elevated past. Far from the significant personal items found in ancient burials, and the climate controlled, sealed environment of museum storage, these trash objects populate municipal dumps and urban beaches, street gutters and rivers. They oxidize, but more so they rot. They suggest what Robert Stam calls the "strategic redemption of the low, the despised, the imperfect," and what Mary Douglas named "matter out of place." It is this out-of-placeness, or more an aesthetic *other*-placeness—borne by imperfect, discarded, and decaying objects and the conversational space that emerges out of their proximity to one another—that is the focus of this work.

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ENDNOTES

1 For other artists' analyses of the conceptual process and aesthetic experience of making artwork, see Berger (1974) *The Look of Things: Essays by John Berger* (pp. 165-177) and Margaret MacIntyre Latta (2001) "Letting Aesthetic Experience Tell Its Own Tale: A Reminder."

2 Below is Elbow's (1998, p. 2) approach for collage writing.

> Directions for writing a collage:
> Do or gather as much of your writing on your topic as you can. Go fast, don't worry. Freewriting is a good idea. Take thoughts in any order that they come.
> Go through what you have and choose best and potentially best bits—freely cutting to find long and short sections.
> Revise what you have but only by cutting, not by rewriting. Cut paragraphs and sentences; cut phrases and words. Of course you can cheat by doing some rewriting, but it's amazing what is possible by just cutting.
> Figure out a pleasing order for the bits: perhaps logical, more likely intuitive and associative—maybe even random.
> Another option: add fragments of writing by others—as I have done here.

3 For Elbow (1998), collage writing "uses the simplest but most effective aesthetic principle: put things together if they sort of go. They need to 'go'… but not too well. Interest and pleasure increase if there is some friction, resistance, difference." (p. 1) Elbow's approach juxtaposes text fragments, bits called "blips" or "crots" (p. 3)—prose, poetry, lists, conversations, notes. It uses the symbol *** to denote a boundary between a crot and those that precede and follow in vertically linear sequence; it uses the symbol… to separate related text fragments within a single crot. Expanding on Elbow, Ely, et al. (1997) describe collage writing and related forms as textual bricolage, a mode of working that manipulates a fixed set of words or ideas to form new meanings. They extend presentational options from Elbow's linearly sequenced text fragments to text blocks placed all over the page, allowing for more immediately apparent juxtaposition of complementary, contrasting, and competing ideas. I use both of these organizational strategies, and others that combine text and image, throughout the chapter.

4 Dead Horse Bay lies between the Gerritsen Inlet and Rockaway Inlet in Brooklyn, New York. Historically, the surrounding land housed a flour mill (17th century) and a fertilizer (from dead animals, hence the name) manufacturer (19th century).

5 The salt marsh was a landfill for New York City garbage and in 1926 much of the marsh and adjoining area was pumped with sand from Jamaica Bay.

6 See, for example, Chakaia Booker's *It's So Hard To Be Green* (2000), made from reclaimed rubber tires (www.chakaiabooker.com) and the work of the Philadelphia-based collective, Dumpster Divers (www.dumpsterdivers.com).

7 See http://greenmuseum.org/content/work_index/img_id-317__prev_size-0__artist_id-37__work_id-74.html

8 Miller (2005, p. 7) writes:

> ...while it is possible to have theories of things, any such theory seems to ignore the evident lack of any defensible definition of thingness.... Is an ephemeral image, a moment in a streaming video, a thing? Or if the image is frozen as a still, is it now a thing? Is a dream, a city, a sensation, a derivative, an ideology, a landscape, a decay, a kiss? I haven't the least idea.

9 See www.lissongallery.com/#/artists/richard-wentworth/works/

10 Furlong (1995, ¶ 2).

11 In *Waste Not, Want Not: A Social History of Trash*, Susan Strasser (1999) chronicles in detail the cultural norms of reuse—and the societal demand for consumption in the service of maintaining the welfare of the country through planned obsolescence of material goods. She quotes Richardson Wright, who wrote in the magazine *House and Garden* in 1930:

> We live in a machine age. To maintain prosperity we must keep the machines working, for when the machines are functioning men can labor and earn wages. The good citizen does not repair the old; he buys anew. The shoes that crack are to be thrown away. Don't patch them. When the car gets crotchety, haul it to the town's dump. Give to the ashman's oblivion the leaky pot, the broken umbrella, the clock that doesn't tick. To keep prosperity we must keep those machines going. (In Strasser, 1999, p. 203)

12 Furlong (1995, ¶ 2).

13 Stam (1998, ¶ 21) writes:

> The garbage pile can be seen as an archeological treasure trove precisely because of its concentrated, synecdochic, compressed character. As congealed history, garbage reveals a checkered past. As time materialized in space, it is coagulated sociality, a gooey distillation of society's contradictions.

14 In *Purity and Danger*, Douglas (1966) described how a culture's relationship to dirt is indicative of a socially based tension between order and disorder. She wrote: "If uncleanness is matter out of place, we must approach it through order. Uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained" (p. 50). For Douglas, we classify as "dirt" that which cannot be tidily ordered.

15 In separate case studies on people's attachment to things, Miller (2008) and Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) interviewed individuals and families in their homes to identify household objects that were seen as significant or meaningful to their owners and to describe why that is so. Their work details the ways in which people develop relationships with common objects, and the diverse nature of the psychological and sociological "strings" that form those attachments.

16 Martin Heidegger (1993), in the essay "The Origin of the Work of Art," wrote about the essence of things, what makes them what they are and distinguishes them from what they are not. In his original essay written in the mid-1930s, he was referring to art, not driftwood. But in the '50s, as he was revising the original version of the essay, people were beginning to consider and collect driftwood as if it *were* art. The concept of "thingliness" is especially relevant in this context.

17 Today, one can find treatises on a wide range of common and seemingly un-monumental objects and materials such as the pencil and toothpick (Petroski 2002, 2008), the chair (Cranz, 2000), and plastic (Fenichell, 1996; Meikle, 1997).

18 In the film *Citizen Kane*, "Rosebud" is the final word uttered by Charles Foster Kane. It refers to Kane's childhood memory of happiness playing in the snow and to "Rosebud," his sled. The film sums up a man's entire life in one material object—exemplifying that "other" absorption of objects described by McCreight (2005).

19 The original source of this quote is Muir's book *My First Summer in the Sierra* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911); the quote appears on p. 110 of the Sierra Club Books 1988 edition.

20 John Ash, *The Branching Stairs*, pp. 59-60.

21 Bachelard (1994) explores similar territory in the book *The Poetics Of Space: The Classic Look At How We Experience Intimate Spaces*.

Maternal Representations, Intersubjectivity, and the Making of the Self

■ DENISE AMY BAXTER AND SARA WILSON MCKAY

INTRODUCTION: VISUALITY, MATERIALITY, AND THE SELF, OR, WHATEVER HAPPENED TO STUFF?

In the summer of 1996 the journal *October* published the results of a "Visual Culture Questionnaire," which has subsequently been described as a "backlash" (Stanworth, 2002, p. 109), "courting controversy" (Morra & Smith, 2006, p. 3), and most frequently as "now infamous" (Dikovitskaya, 2002, p. 4; Jay, 2005, p. 139). Indeed the questions were forthrightly antagonistic toward visual culture studies. While the first question pitted visual culture against art history,[1] the third raised the specter of the disembodied visual.[2] Tom Crow, then an art history professor at Yale University, subsequently director of the Getty Research Institute until, again, returning to the professoriate at the Institute of Fine Arts at NYU, most 'infamously' condemned visual culture studies and what he perceived of as its inevitable "deskilling." In his words: "To surrender a history of art to a history of images will indeed mean a de-skilling of interpretation, an inevitable misrecognition and misrepresentation of one realm of profound human endeavor" (Alpers, et al., 1996, p. 36). Yet even while in her response Carol Armstrong does worry about visual culture's "predilection for the disembodied image, and with it a distrust of the material dimension of cultural objects" (Alpers, et al., 1996, p. 27), her fear that,

> Within this model [of visual culture studies], paintings and such are to be viewed not as particularized *things* made for particular historical uses, but as exchanges circulating in some great, boundless, and often curiously ahistorical economy of images, subjects, and other representations... (p. 27)

might offer instead a positive model from which to function—namely the call to examine "paintings and such... as particularized *things* made for particular historical uses" (p. 27). Similarly, as Margaret Dikovistkaya (2005), in her revisitation of that *October* questionnaire, claims that "...visual studies is more [than the discipline of art history] interested in systems of visuality than in singular objects; thus the competencies of the latter are expanded" (p. 73), one wonders, however, if it is possible to explore the system as a whole without considering the individual object within its realm.

While W.J.T. Mitchell has been generally considered a pivotal theorist at the heart of the visual culture turn, indeed he repeatedly indicates his discomfort with the hegemony of the eye. At various times, W.J.T. Mitchell (2002) presents similar fears and goals, for example as in his essay "Showing Seeing" when he opines that,

> The erosion of the forensic skills of connoisseurship and authentication among art historians in favor of a generalized iconological interpretive expertise is a trade-off that ought to trouble us. I want both kinds of expertise to be available so that the next generation of art historians will be skilled with *both* the concrete materiality of art objects and practices, *and* with the intricacies of the dazzling PowerPoint presentation that moves effortlessly across the audio-visual media in search of meaning." (p. 168)

Yet perhaps his argument can be both broadened—this is not a question exclusive to the discipline of art history—and itself made more concrete. Both connoisseurship and iconological interpretation alike are insufficient to attend to the materiality of objects and the effects of this materiality on the constitution of the self. As Mitchell (2005a) repeatedly argues, there are no purely visual media and "*all media are mixed media*"(p. 260, italics in original). For Mitchell this claim is intended as a call to action, namely that, "It is because there are no visual media that we need a concept of visual culture" (p. 265).

In this chapter, we begin with the *October* "Visual culture questionnaire" and engage initially with a visual culture bibliography as a deliberate move to extract from the literature of visual culture studies a key element that ironically, we argue, is at the core of material culture studies. Within the literature of material culture studies there is a consistent struggle to find a disciplinary home for analysis of objects in their multi-sensory, material, existence. Our essay is intended to point to one aspect of the ethical ramifications of a persistent and multifaceted avoidance of materiality itself. Yet in so doing, it would be inappropriate not to acknowledge key explorations of the trajectories of material culture studies, and the persistent frustrations experienced by its very practitioners—perhaps most succinctly contained in the title to Gary Carson's chapter, "Material Culture History: The Scholarship Nobody Knows" (1997). The trajectories and terrains, particularly in the American context, are fruitfully explored in, among others, Fleming (1969); Prown (1982); Schlereth (1985); Schlereth (1992); Pocius (1991); Douglas (1994); Martin and Garrison (1997); Myers (2001); Buchli (2002); and Miller (2005).[3]

While there has been notable attention paid to visual culture in art education (Duncum, 2001; Freedman, 2000; Tavin, 2003; among others), Bolin and Blandy (2003) challenge the field of art education to embrace the methodological concerns of material culture in an effort to be more attentive to the multi-sensory and cross/inter-disciplinary aspects of materiality. Their leading call to action has been productively taken up by art educators such as Burkhart (2006) , Feldhusen (2008), and Ulbricht (2007) to name just a few. Additionally, in their consideration of embodiment, we suggest that the contributors to Stephanie Springgay and Debra Freedman's *Curriculum and the Cultural Body* (2007) anthology should also be understood as practitioners of material culture studies. Another thread of the material culture approach can be seen as originating within the formal concerns of art historians.[4] Noted American art historian Jules Prown, who in 1982 laid out his own "Introduction to Material Culture," in 1995 succinctly described his own approach to cultural art history and his focus on material culture in the following way:

> The process begins with an extended descriptive and deductive object analysis to prevent the premature, mind-closing imposition of contemporary biases. It then proceeds to the framing of questions or hypotheses, followed by the application of the perspectives and insights of our time and place—psychology, semiotics, structuralism, deconstruction, Marxist theory, gender studies, whatever is the preferred approach of the analyst—to arrive at new understandings. (p. 3)

While we have previously attended to the actual object set discussed in this paper, engaging especially with the social questions provoked by the objects (Wilson McKay & Baxter, 2007), we consider this chapter's purpose to be an exploration of the philosophical reasons for engaging the integrated material and visual aspects of cultural artifacts.

Given our understanding of material culture studies, we take up Mitchell's contention that "There Are No Visual Media," in order to make an even more basic, but perhaps even more overlooked claim. We mean to point to the pervasive avoidance of materiality and recognize the significance of the material support of images and their viewers. To be blunt, we inhabit not only subject positions, but bodies. We are embodied subjects. As we proceed through our daily routine, the material nature of our corpus may not necessarily be at the forefront of our thoughts—unless we are hungry, thirst, or are in pain—unless we are pregnant. Indeed, to use an example in relationship to the series of objects that we'll be using as our case study, the patent materiality of the pregnant body is indisputable. As the quip goes, you cannot be just a little pregnant. Similarly you usually cannot be pregnant in your mind alone. The mind and body work together in the material production of motherhood. This recognition of the literal materiality of the production of selves serves to illuminate our physical engagement with the objects that shape our world. We recognize the veracity of the arguments from psychoanalytic theory, and some strains of visual culture studies in this tradition, regarding the foundational importance of the image or *imago*.[5] But, we seek

to draw further attention to the ways that images are not just freely floating. Instead our interactions with them are based upon their physical support and we engage with them in a physical manner, even if it is just forwarding the PowerPoint. While we want to argue for the importance of a focus on visuality or ways of seeing, we argue that it cannot and should not be separated from the object upon which vision is trained.

Here, a case study of student confrontations with a set of objects (see Figure 1) provides the impetus for a consideration of the role of the material both in relationship to visual and material culture studies and their fruitful tensions, but also, more significantly, in the constitution of the self. The subject matter of these patently bizarre objects—pregnancy—forces a consideration of the materiality of objects, disallowing any retreat into a clinical visuality of ideas. In taking up the materiality of these objects, and our students' resistance to engaging with them, namely their material qualities, we argue that the maternal form decries a traditional metaphysical subject-object split, thereby urging a reconsideration of the role

1490 B.C.: ANCIENT EGYPT
31 B.C.: ROMAN STOLA
EARLY 14TH CENTURY SILHOUETTE
15TH CENTURY HABIT
1703: FRENCH PEIGNOIR
1786: MARIE ANTOINETTE LÉVITE
PAGE BOY'S MUSEUM IN MINIATURE... MATERNITY COSTUMES 1490 B.C. TO 1951 A.D.
1805: EMPIRE LINE
1850: EMPRESS EUGENIE CRINOLINE

FIGURE 1. PageBoy Maternity's "Museum in Miniature... Maternity Costumes from 1490 B.C. to 1951 A.D." from the *PageBoy Maternity Spring 1951 catalogue titled PageBoy Fashion for Mothers-to-be makes strides in fashion history.* (Only eight of the nine dolls are reproduced in the catalogue.) Catalogue and dolls held by the Texas Fashion Collection.

PAGE BOY CALLS IT THE "SUGAR SCOOP"... RAYON FAILLE
DRESS WITH SCOOPED NECKLINE AND YARDS OF WHITE
RIC-RAC. DRAWSTRING ADJUSTMENT GATHERS
IN THE SWIRLING SKIRT TO MAKE A WAIST LOOK SMALLER.
NAVY, BLACK OR COCOA.
SIZES 10-18. STYLE 312. 17.95
UNDERNEATH, A SWEET
AS SUGAR WHITE
ORGANDY BLOUSE, POUF
SLEEVED. SIZES 10-18.
STYLE 312b. 8.95

FIGURE 2 (LEFT). Illustration from an undated PageBoy Maternity catalogue. Catalogue held by the Texas Fashion Collection.

FIGURE 3 (BELOW). Detail of the "1703 French Peignoir" doll. Texas Fashion Collection. *Photograph courtesy of Heather Imholt.*

that experience and objects play in constructing an intersubjective self. Pregnancy is the site where the intersubjective self is most explicitly lived.[6] Yet despite the rallying cry since at least 1969 that "the personal is political" (Hanisch, 1969, unpaginated), Barbara Kruger's oft-reprinted 1989 claim that "Your [and my!] body is a battleground," the embodied self remains largely denied within the academy and its structures.[7] Indeed, we argue that this reality is not limited to issues of gender, class, nation, and sexuality, but rather that there is a pervasive tendency toward a conceptual dematerialization of self, resulting in generalized limited agency and delimited encounters with an-other in the social sphere. In short, the Cartesian dilemma continues to limit our social constructions, with profound political and ethical implications. We argue that treating the material with the same attention as the visual (giving body and mind equal time), or, rather, attending to the necessary interplay of material and idea, is a particularly useful way to explore how the self is actually an interplay of idea and material. Indeed, the self is already substance as well as thought, and this interplay is of crucial importance as it extends to our understandings of the social arena. How we choose (or not) to engage with materiality has a large bearing on how we politically and philosophically engage with the world.

AVOIDING MATERIALITY

Textual explorations and theoretical inquiries remain safely discursively contained. In contrast, to put it plainly, objects are messy. Objects, much like bodies, and it is in this way that they are the most troubling, are mutable and strangely fluid and uncontainable—skin is simply insufficient and the ravages of time are patently apparent. The series of pregnant fashion dolls created for PageBoy Maternity in the 1950s offers an opportunity—although, crucially, one that is in no way unique—to tease out the relationships between the threads of visual and material culture with the understanding that images and objects alike play formative roles in the construction of the self.

Produced as in-store display items for the high-end PageBoy chain, these dolls represent famous historical women, pregnant, in historically appropriate maternity garments.[8] We have, therefore, Marie-Antoinette in the loose-fitting chemise undergarment that she helped to popularize and Empress Eugenie in crinolines (see Figure 1). The dolls figured public and fashionable maternal bodies to an audience for whom the contemporary pregnant body was only a fact and never a representation.

Even in PageBoy's own catalogue, maternity wear is shown on wasp-waisted models. The dolls themselves had a public and material existence, travelling from city to city. Now residing in the Texas Fashion Collection on the campus of the University of North Texas, the existence of the dolls as objects rather than images continues to have an impact. Their materiality poses both practical and theoretical problems.

Limbs are broken. Fabric is deteriorating. Having never been meant for the archives—even the PageBoy designer, who commissioned the dolls, described them as marketing gimmick (Gartner, personal communication, September 2004)—what is to be done with them? For example, the dolls are an anomaly in a fashion collection. Does their conservation in any way merit the use of scant resources? They fit no particular category—neither truly doll nor fashionable object. While cases regarding their relationship to either Barbie or historical fashion dolls may be made, these objects, like so many others, do not fit our preconceptions. They are, in the words of almost all of our students, "weird." Indeed it is their forthright messiness that underscores the pertinence of a material culture approach. Both John Forrest (1991) and Constance Classen (1998) have called for multisensory approaches to objects. Forrest describes his goals for renunciation of "object-as-image kind of analysis" (p. 49), and Classen presents herself in opposition to what she describes as "the visualist regime of modernity" (p. 1) encouraging attentiveness to different sorts of objects, to be sure, but also different ways of approaching these objects.

These were not the objects to which art education and art history students have become accustomed to studying, interrogating, or otherwise taking seriously, which is what we asked them to do. In Spring 2008, students at the University of North Texas enrolled in an art history graduate course explicitly designed as a special topics seminar exploring the Visuality of the Maternal Form, and those at Virginia Commonwealth University in a graduate level

FIGURE 4. Traveling cases for the PageBoy Maternity fashion dolls. De-accessioned by the Texas Fashion Collection, these cases are now the possession of Denise Amy Baxter. *Photograph courtesy of George C. Roland.*

art education course in curriculum theory. Our idea was to bring graduate students in art education and art history together in a co-taught seminar, using the PageBoy dolls as a point of departure for considerations both of representations of the maternal and the intersections between art education and art history. The students in the art history course knew they were signing on to explore a topic that has not been widely theorized within the visual arts and presumably were interested in investigating the maternal subject position by their selection of the course. Yet nonetheless they demonstrated a near uniform inability to bring the same intellectual rigor to the investigation as they did to their more traditional art history seminars. The students in the art education course were surprised to be asked to think through the visual culture of motherhood, as a curricular framing device the instructor used to call attention to meaningful curriculum development through big ideas. Indeed they expressed dismay and questioned its relevance and appropriateness for classroom instruction.

From the onset, students were asked to engage, in apparently unprecedented and clearly uncomfortable ways, with the physicality of the objects. Students saw the dolls, rather than their projected facsimiles.

Further, rather than seeing them under glass or from a protective distance, such as within the hushed and sanctioned space of the museum or gallery, students were invited to handle the dolls and had access to their traveling cases, covered with mailing labels, flight information, and the dents and scrapes accumulated along their journeys. This access to the actual objects themselves was imperative to us. Even though the two classes would be meeting together virtually, using a wiki and other Web 2.0 media, students in Virginia and Texas alike had physical access to both dolls and cases. We shared the pedagogical goals of Margaret A. Stott and Barrie Reynolds (1987) regarding the importance of the physical handling of objects as part of the path toward what they refer to as "the total story of objects" (p. 14). Rather than reveling in this unprecedented access to the object, however, students seemed confounded and disinterested, as if the material presence of the objects degraded them. While the final art history seminar papers ran the typical gamut in terms of quality, they uniformly avoided the dolls. Significantly they did not eschew them for high art objects, but instead for significantly less tangible forms of visual culture, whether that was a Dior fashion show on YouTube or a Suave advertising campaign. While the art education students were required to engage with the dolls and other related materials for their culminating curricular projects, they nonetheless registered their resistance. One described the required objects as "superfluous or less than inspiring;" another claimed a "complete disinterest in the subject." A third refused to engage the requirement altogether, declaring "I finally decided that I would accept the donated materials and sell them, at auction, to raise money that I could then use to purchase materials that could be used in the classroom."

Stott and Reynolds (1987) rightly point out that students do typically face an initial reluctance to engage with the physical qualities of objects, noting that "we are not usually encouraged in our schooling to trust our own intuition and senses nor to incorporate their conclusions into our store of 'useful and valid information'" (p. 16). Although this certainly played a part, we believe that the discomfort of our students seemed to stem primarily from two related concerns: (1) the nature of the objects as objects rather than images, and (2) their representation of the intersubjective duality of the pregnant body. While we saw the dolls as an opportunity to interrogate the Cartesian split between subject/object; idea/material; mind/body, not one student chose to deal directly with the materiality of the pregnant dolls. This may be because, as Mitchell (2005b) explains, "we want works of art to have lives of their own, but we also want to contain and regulate that life" (p. 149). Thus, Mitchell reminds us that an object implies a relationship to a subject. This relationship shapes our ability to fully engage (much less teach) outside easily contained and conceptualized systems. The materiality of the dolls gives us an opportunity to, as Sherry Turkle (2007) suggests, use objects "to bring philosophy down to earth" (p. 308).

MATERIAL/MATERNAL: PREGNANT BODIES AND AN ETHICS OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY

In bringing the philosophical Cartesian dilemma down to earth, the pregnant dolls invoke the pregnant body and the dilemma of the self and its materiality. British scholar Imogen Tyler (2000) recounts her experience living the maternal subject position while simultaneously looking for her place within traditional philosophical discourse, concluding that:

> For this experience revealed to me more directly than ever before the way in which masculine principles of individuality, non-contradiction and singular temporality, still underpin basic understandings of subjectivity. Can the philosophical body, philosophical bodies, contain, account for, or even imagine a body, a subject, that reproduces others, not metaphorically, but literally? (p. 289)

In taking up Tyler's question of how the realm of ideas can account for materiality, we suggest a need to theorize intersubjective space as more than a concept, but as a lived materiality.

The Western philosophical tradition typically portrays the body as base. To be in the body is considered less than being in the realm of the mind. The body, the visceral, the material, then, is positioned as inferior to the mind, to ideas. In the case of the maternal subject position, the *material* pregnant body is construed as inferior to the *idea* of the maternal; just note the philosophical adulations of ideas gestating, invoking maternal metaphors (Tyler 2000, p. 291). However, as we delve further into our problematic site, we begin with a question about the shared qualities of the material and the maternal. Quite literally we ask, to what degree is the material etymologically related to, connected to, the maternal?

Material has as its root *matter,* which has been linked to *mater*—or origin, source, mother, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, "the result of the first act of creation" (2009, Part IV, section 22b).[12] This powerful, causal linkage, however, seems to be lost in classical Latin, wherein woman is ascribed to the realm of inert and senseless matter. Yet, the pregnant woman is a site of conflict; her being, the viewing and representation of her materiality, refuses to be separated from the idea of her maternity. In describing her own pregnancy, Tyler (2000) expresses this aptly:

> I am not metaphor, but real alien becoming, perpetually modified. My body, my massive pregnant body, wants to stand up, to go to the front of the room, to present itself as a question. The dichotomy of subject and object is called into question by this question, as it is already posed by this body, presented, here and now. It dawns on me, that my pregnant embodiment is a topology which remains unmapped, unthought, indeed unthinkable, within a philosophical landscape of stable forms. (p. 290)

The question that Tyler's body and, indeed, her self, poses is how is it that her material state questions and denies stable philosophical categories? The pregnant dolls too, with their weird, impossible to categorize, material existence, trouble the smoothed airbrushed image and idea of pregnancy.

The dolls present a pedagogically powerful place because they prevent and interrupt visual classification with regard to subjectivity. We take up this position not just as an intellectual activity of interest or a bizarre curiosity, though admittedly this line of inquiry did all begin with the haunting, odd figures and their discomfit in the Texas Fashion Collection. Rather, after working with the dolls now for nearly four years, we see that the avoidance of materiality, both our students' and our own, has demanded that we confront our own desires for easy categories instead of messy objects.[13] This compels us to take up Mitchell's claim that visual culture is not just about the social construction of the visual but about the visual (and material) construction of the social (Mitchell, 2005b, p. 346). In other words, what can our consideration of the Cartesian subject-object; idea-material dilemma yield for the construction of the social? This question leads us to the pursuit of an intersubjective understanding with ethical implications for how we interact with objects and others.

We agree with Bakhtinian scholar Michael Gardiner (2000), who argues that modern thought is characterized by the "attempt to transcend our situatedness in concrete time/space" by largely subscribing to totalizing systems (p. 49). This comes with grave consequences when, as Bakhtin (1993) offers, we cease to be present in the world as "individually and answerably active human beings" (p. 7). Further, in pursuing a social world of meaning, Gardiner (2000) argues that Bakhtin's interest in developing a theory of alterity and intersubjectivity comes from his belief that "the self must be understood as a dynamic, embodied and restlessly creative entity that strives to attribute meaning and value to its life and surrounding" (p. 49). In this view of subjectivity, "the self is continually 'reauthored' as its life and circumstances change" (p. 49). This continual transformation (likely due to interactions with the material world) is, in fact, better termed intersubjectivity. Thus, we view recovering the material aspects of the visual as an ethical stance, akin to Bakthin's answerability, when abstract cognition is denied and "we can be wholly 'answerable' for our actions, in the sense that we are reflexively conscious of the existential and ethical implications of our acts" (Gardiner, 2000, p. 50). Engaging the material in our visually excessive world is a step towards answerable intersubjectivity, where abstract cognition is grounded in the world, in both objects and others alike.

CONCLUSION: MATERIALITY, INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE SELF

The classroom is a profound arena for thinking through our interactions with others. Yet often the classroom offers a dogmatic pursuit of scientific rationalism through which "the irrepressible complexity and ambiguity that marks the everyday world is eliminated" (Gardiner, 2000, p. 48). Pedagogically, combining image and matter, in contrast, helps create selves that embrace embodiment. The body, its materiality, helps us theorize an engaged intersubjectivity because "to privilege a purely cognitive relation to the other and our lived environment... reinforces an instrumental, disengaged attitude towards the world" (Gardiner, 2000, p. 48). The resistance of the subject-object/idea-material split may be a critical lesson of the classroom.

For example, at the conclusion of Mitchell's important essay "Showing Seeing," he discusses a class exercise he has students perform to exhibit seeing (Mitchell, 2002). He claims that one of the most effective and provocative performances was a mother who brought in her squirmy 9-month-old son, in an effort to describe "cuteness" when all descriptors about the baby should signify to the contrary. As the mother talked, the child revealed his subjecthood (denying his status as object) by playing to the coos of the audience: the subject-object exercise became subject-subject. How might this celebrated exercise have been different had the mother stood there as a pregnant woman and described the unseen, or involved the audience in the bizarre visual and material manifestations of an elbow protruding across the pregnant belly? Would the materiality of the pregnant body, where mother and baby are literally intertwined, call us to consider the messy state of lived intersubjectivity? From a material culture studies perspective, we wonder what would be the equivalent of showing seeing—embracing materiality?

We argue that these pregnant dolls encourage investigations beyond the visual "templates that structure our encounters with other human beings" (Mitchell, 2005b, p. 351). The dolls function as what Hubert Damisch (Bois, Hollier, Krauss & Damisch, 1998) would call theoretical objects: they both "oblige one to do theory" and "furnish [us] with the means of doing it" (p. 8). In short, the dolls provide a means to acknowledge our materiality, altering the subject-object (or even Mitchell's subject-subject) template for constructing the social world. Intersubjectivity—by requiring material interaction of self with the world—offers an alternative template because it troubles distanced and mediated configurations of the social world. Thus, intersubjectivity increases possibilities for ethical engagement, calling for answerable interactions within the public realm.

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ENDNOTES

1 Significantly, this was an antagonistic pairing of visual culture and "new art history" rather than the methodologically conservative and perhaps consequently more problematic discipline of old. "...Hence, it is argued by some that visual culture is in an eccentric (even, at times, antagonistic) position with regard to the 'new art history' with its social-historical and semiotic imperatives and models of 'context' and 'text'" (Alpers, et al., 1996, p. 25).

2 "It has been suggested that the precondition for visual studies as an interdisciplinary rubric is a newly wrought conception of the visual as disembodied *image*, re-created in the virtual spaces of sign-exchange and phantasmatic projection" (Alpers, et al., 1996, p. 25).

3 See also the continuing contributions to www.materialworldblog.com

4 In "Shaping the Field: The Multidisciplinary Perspectives of Material Culture," Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison identify art history, history, and anthropology as the three primary branches in the genealogy of the development of material culture (Martin & Garrison, 1997).

5 In Lacan's formulations the self is constituted in its relationship to the *imago* (Lacan, 1984). Within Lacan's mirror stage, the reflection may be the child's own, but it is, crucially, understood as external to the child (Lacan, 2007).

6 See, for example, Julia Kristeva's exploration of this notion of duality in "Stabat Mater" (Kristeva, 1986). Here intersubjectivity is textually visualized through the two columns of text. Significantly, students in the art history seminar were largely resistant to this textual strategy, expressing their frustration at being asked to think simultaneously through multiple perspectives.

7 For an exemplary theoretical exploration of this, see Imogen Tyler, "Reframing Pregnant Embodiment" (2000). For some practical ramifications, it is worth looking at the subdivisions (as well as the individual essays) of the recently published book *Mama, Ph.D.* edited by Elrena Evans and Caroline Grant (2008), such as "That Mommy Thing" and "Recovering Academic," which deal primarily with the ironic incompatibility of motherhood and academic life. In a recent discussion with the editors of this volume, Andrea O'Reilly, the founding director of The Association for Research on Mothering, the first feminist research association on the topic of mothering and motherhood, and the founding and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*, clearly expressed this dichotomy in arguing that, "As a visible, out (not to mentioning bleeding, leaking) mom, you are clearly trespassing in the cerebral disembodied academy" (Hewett, 2008, ¶ 17). O'Reilly is currently engaged on a Social Science Humanities Research Council of Canada grant-funded project on the experiences of mothers in academe. This is a project for which Denise Amy Baxter was interviewed during Andrea O'Reilly's time at the University of North Texas as part of the Spring 2009 Maternal Reflections lecture series there. Imogen Tyler was also a participant in the series.

8 The dolls could therefore be understood as fetishizing the PageBoy garments on sale in the store, creating a value to them that far exceeded the simple combination of material and labor value (Marx, 1906). Building upon Marx, Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation demonstrates how commodities may be seen as hailing individuals – the means by which individuals see themselves as being addressed and answer the call (Althusser, 1971). Marx and Althusser, therefore, point to ways that the intersubjective relationship is overwritten with power relations and may be, at least in part, commodified. The ways that commodification may complicate the intersubjective relationship are crucially important, and will be the focus of further investigations.

9 We would like to thank the editors of this volume for their guidance to this thread of scholarship, particularly in urging us to clarify our engagement, or lack thereof, with material culture perspectives viz-a-viz our class experience.

10 Indeed, students were seemingly more comfortable with a reified idea of the dolls than the dolls themselves. A close consideration of *Reification*, published by Oxford University Press (2008) by Axel Honneth, Judith Butler, Raymond Geuss, Martin Jay, and Jonathan Lear, further illuminates this contemporary take on an old problem.

11 While not a single art history seminar paper engaged with the dolls in any significant manner, two were noteworthy for their engagement with the issues that the dolls were intended to raise. These were Emily Black's paper "'Striking a Match' with Maternity: Matchbooks, Planned Parenthood of Fort Worth 1945-1955" and Sarah Feit's investigation of other forms of PageBoy advertising materials, such as their catalogues, in "Fashioning Maternity in the 1950's: A New Maternal Form."

12 For more on the etymological links between *Mater* and *matter/material*, see www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=matter. A cursory review of OED references to matter suggest that there is a strong connection between *matter* and the gendered *maternal*. For example, "1561 T. Hoby tr. B. Castiglione *Courtyer* III. sig. Cciiii^{v}, (It is the opinion of most wise men) the man is likened to the Fourme, the woman to the Mattier" (OED, 2009).

13 Only now are we finally moving into an object-based reality with these dolls as Kathleen Keys, an art educator at Boise State in Idaho, has received funding to exhibit the dolls and other materials that question the maternal subject position in the spring of 2010.

Of Matter and Metaphor: Travel, Purchases, and Cultural Identity ■ DAN SERIG

For what you really collect is always yourself. (Baudrillard, 1968/2005, p. 97)

Social, cultural, and individual identities must develop more than ever through the use of the imagination in everyday life. Acculturation no longer occurs as a simple transference of customs and beliefs. Cultural "imaginary landscapes" result from a transnational, deterritorialized system wherein the United States is but one player and no longer the self-appointed captain (Appadurai, 1996). An education in art becomes more necessary in this globalized context if these identities, these imagined landscapes, are to be critically developed and fully explored—especially if we want a democratic citizenry. In this chapter, I address one aspect of the journey to develop an identity within the tension of globalized and tribalized networks by exploring tourist objects. Specifically, I consider the things purchased by a group of art educators during a trip to Ecuador in the summer of 2008. Through an analysis of this exploration, three themes emerge that may contribute to a theory of material culture studies within art education. Before I reveal these themes, however, let me contextualize the trip and the concept of tourist objects.

CONTEXT

For 2 weeks during the summer of 2008, Juan Ormaza and I led a group of art education graduate students and professors through the Sierra region of Ecuador. We worked with and observed various artists, artisans, craftspeople, teachers, and institutions. Starting in Quito, students experienced the urban arts and cultural environment through visits to museums, cathedrals, cultural centers, markets, and artists' studios. From Quito students explored the surrounding Andean towns and villages to experience the rural art world of Ecuador. Students considered alternative educational models in the different locations and learned how teachers and artists in another country engaged their art and pedagogical practices individually, communally, and as a mix of cultures. Upon returning to the United States, students used collected and purchased artifacts, photos, artwork, journals, and other records of material culture to create art in response to the experiences in Ecuador. These works were then exhibited in a college gallery.

Near the end of our trip, I asked the others to arrange their purchases so the collections could be photographed. Over the next several weeks, I interviewed many of the students and professors about their collections and their relationships to the objects. The analysis of this data, along with the literature reviewed, led to the interpretations presented in this chapter.

THE TOURIST OBJECT

John Crowe, one of the traveling professors, noticed the St. Francis statuette shortly after we entered the outdoor market. The ceramic saint, minus one eye, lay supine on the ground surrounded by a small collection of antique odds and ends. Its melancholy affect befit its hand raised in pious authority. John knew he had to own the statuette, and the older gentleman, purveyor of this collection, gracefully bargained with me in my rudimentary Spanish to finalize the transaction. Later that day, as John walked the market holding St. Francis gingerly in his arm, local women approached, kissed the statuette and made the sign of the cross. John was mesmerized. St. Francis now resides in John's home, where he can be viewed every day. I enjoy when John recounts this story.

While this vignette may be a bit extraordinary, it characterizes the kind of relationship often associated with souvenirs. Congdon, Hicks, and Blandy (2005) assert that:

> Tourist art... facilitates interconnectedness between place, people, and experience. We are connected through the objects by virtue of their power to evoke and elicit particular events, times and places. These objects provide occasions for individuals to create and speak narratives that inform both personal and collective history. (p. 31)

The souvenir becomes a relational hub within a network of associations. These associations remind us of an experience, but they also serve to form a new experience that may distort or blur the initial memory of a place (Congdon, et al., 2005). But who is to say which is more significant or meaningful: the refined initial memory of the experience or the continually evolving relational memory with the tourist object? In this paradox, our relationship with tourist objects is metaphoric. This brings me to the three themes that emerged during this research that I explore in greater depth after the following introduction.

INTRODUCTION OF THEMES

Theme one: Our relationships with objects (and with each other) reveal a metaphoric reality. The St. Francis statuette exemplifies how an object serves as a hub for associations, but these relations involve more than memories: "It is not just an interdependence of body and object that we observe, but a coalescence of mind, body and object" (Knappett, 2005, p. 34). This coalescence impacts identity development, which means the types and kinds of things surrounding us, purchased by us, and consumed by us help us understand ourselves. Within the contemporary context of globalization, we must come to terms with relentless change. Attfield (2000) cautions this is a "condition that constantly threatens and works against the grain of individuality, but at the same time the context within which individuals form their self-identity" (pp. 173-174).

Theme two: Studying material culture works within this reality as a hybridized, metaphor-centric process. Some within the social sciences such as Schiffer (1999) attempt to apply a reductionist approach to studying objects that ignore culture and promote a single-methodological lens through which to conduct research. This denies the entirety of the phenomenon of our relationships with objects and denies the messy work of interpreting meaning. Material culture studies, on the other hand, reject this rigidity in favor of cross-disciplinary, transdisciplinary, and postdisciplinary methodologies. This hybrid approach makes material culture studies well suited to the arts. The arts and material culture studies understand that meaning is culturally created and metaphor-centric. In contemporary art practices this is evidenced by the resurgence of collage and bricolage (White, 2009). As co-leader of the Ecuador group, Juan Ormaza created a work for the exhibition that elegantly manifests metaphoric processes through a hybridization of influences and materials. Juan's piece, *Quinto Soul* (2008), blends traditions of the colonial Quito School, Catholic iconography, and found objects such as glass eyes and the baby teeth of his son to create a floating, somewhat haunting work. I am further using an image of this piece as my metaphor for the tribalized/globalized tension (Image 1 in Table 1). In this way, my research practice and Juan's art practice rely on similar, metaphoric processes.

Theme three: The field of art education (including teaching, learning, and research) must reflect and explore this metaphoric reality and hybridized process to be relevant. Bolin and Blandy (2003) stated it well: "It is critical to recognize that our current multimedia world is expanding rapidly towards multi-sensory experience.... We risk being rendered obsolete because of our restricted and limited orientation to the world around us" (p. 247). People in and out of the arts are beginning to use their imaginations in ways unimaginable a few years ago. Once relegated to expressive areas such as art, religion, and ritual, creating culture has become much more quotidian, especially with those embracing and with

access to multimedia technologies. This development must impact the content, processes, and research within art education. No longer suited to a top-down hierarchical approach, content in art must be part of the reflexive, dynamic system that feeds ever-changing global, communal, and individual identities. Bolin and Blandy connected content and process in suggesting the use of material culture studies within art education:

> Evidence suggests that orientations to educating people about the arts and culture that are vision centric or focus only on traditional arts disciplines will fail students by preparing them in a much too myopic manner. The multi-sensory orientation of material culture studies is congruent with contemporary trends in arts and culture and will permit art educators to facilitate the aesthetic imagination necessary to engage and to participate with contemporary arts and cultural experiences as well as appreciating and understanding the history of arts and culture in a much more holistic way. (p. 255)

Within this challenge and opportunity, research in art education can work through this holistic approach by using the hybridized methodologies from material culture studies that are congruent with contemporary art practices and the dynamic systems creating culture.

I now turn to opening up these three themes: Our metaphoric reality; hybridized material culture studies; and the metaphoric reality in art education. I use literature from several fields, experiences in Ecuador, my teaching and research experiences, and the stories and artworks of my fellow travelers in fashioning the linkages among these themes. The linked themes then prompt me to suggest a conceptual approach to framing material culture studies in art education.

METAPHORIC REALITY

> *Our psychological life is not in things, or because of them, it is given through them.* (Romanyshyn, 2001, p. 15)

Romanyshyn describes psychological life as a metaphoric reality.[1] One reason for selecting Ecuador as our destination was its metaphoric reality as a microcosm of the globalized/tribalized trends being experienced in every culture. Ecuador struggles with a colonial past and post-colonial present that presented our group with questions regarding material culture, such as: What impact does globalization have on Ecuadorian's everyday lives? How does it impact my values and beliefs? What do I purchase and why? Why are these issues important to me as a person, as a U.S. citizen, as a tourist, as an artist, and as an art teacher?

The variety of goods available to the people of Ecuador that originate from abroad is far more abundant than those that come from within the country. As Bauer (2001) stated:

> With few exceptions, the flow of new goods has generally been into, not out of, Latin America. This is not, however, a simple matter of supply and demand or quality of product. The creation of a material regime takes place in a field of power. (p. 8)

TABLE 1

GLOBALIZED	TRIBALIZED
Macro Scale	Micro Scale
Reducing Trade	Local Resources
Barriers	Communal System
Integration	Interdependence
Reduction of Poverty	Cultural Heritage
Homogenization	Craft
Focus on Large Groups	Focus on Small Groups
Geographically Independent	Geographically Dependent
Technology-Driven	Embodied
Disguised as Freedom	Disguised as Truth
Economics-Centered	Human-Centered

IMAGE 1. Juan Ormaza, *Quinto Soul* (2008). Wood, paint, dress, leather shoes, wire, spoon, glass eye, child's teeth. Approximately 36 x 30 inches. Reproduced courtesy of the artist. *Photograph by Dan Serig.*

This field of power has had a devastating impact on the national/group identity of Ecuadorians: Imports are considered superior, and local goods are inferior. Only recently has this attitude begun to change with the recognition of the value of indigenous cultures (mainly through the efforts of those cultures). Ecuadorians, like most of us, must consciously or unconsciously create (through imagining) an identity woven within a globalized/tribalized society.

Comparing and contrasting the local market versus the mall in Ecuador reveals this reality. An analogy may be made to farmers' markets and shopping malls in the US, but this only touches on some aspects of the interplay involved in Ecuador. Unlike the US, wherein many rural communities have a sprawling Wal-Mart, rural communities in Ecuador gather once or twice a week at a town for market day. These are also sprawling, taking over the town with everything from livestock to plastic dishes made in China. While trips to Wal-Mart and to market day involve deeply intertwined economic and social relationships, I would argue that the priorities may be slightly tilted in different directions. Wal-Mart is first and foremost an economic engine, whereas market day appears to involve much more complex social networking. This tilting of priorities is also evident in the mega-malls of Quito, Ecuador's capital, where the principles of globalization are alive and well. I am not attempting to judge the value, quality, or social-justice issues involved in each of these settings. I present them here as examples of how different cultures and subcultures are being forced to, or are attempting to, navigate between globalized and tribalized systems (Table 1).

Globalized/Tribalized

The synchronous systems of globalization and tribalization confront a greater number of people than at any time in history. We may be at a tipping point wherein "the central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 32). In Ecuador, as in most of Latin America, the majority of consumption, and thus wealth, resides within an elite class. Simultaneously, however, another phenomenon and paradox exists:

> The new orthodoxy of free trade has also created an ocean of relatively inexpensive new goods, previously unimaginable by ordinary people, that now washes into outlet stores, vast Wal-Marts and Home Depots, and even to the most remote households. For some, the gaudy malls, the grease and stench of fast-food franchises, the tacky T-shirts, the vulgarity of Hollywood films must seem as if a global "uncivilizing" process has come round at last, sweeping away the decency and decorum that often accompanied the first, less savage, liberalism. For others, long deprived of the most basic goods, the shelves of tape, tools, steel pans, designer "bluejeanes," cheap shoes, and the democratizing informality of dress and food must seem like a consumer's heaven on earth. (Bauer, 2001, pp. 13-14)

This explains why the partial list of descriptors in Table 1 have positive and negative attributes, as well as those that could go either way. The ambiguity involved supports the need to develop critical pathways (i.e., through art and material culture studies) as we develop our identities within a metaphoric reality.

Authenticity

Answering the question *'What is authentic?'* is about as easy as answering *'What is Art?'* Exploring this quandary in the context of the tourist object serves not to define, but to characterize and even make problematic. An understanding of value systems may be glimpsed through the consideration of various perspectives on what is authentic. Historically, authenticity dealt with "facts" regarding the provenance of objects. Being able to determine the origin of an object and the identity of the maker (e.g., individual or group) established a link from the present to a "knowable" past. But postmodern critical perspectives on history question this version of authenticity. Facts are argued to be part of inter-subjective interpretation

that may not represent the accuracy that they purport. Instead, origin and provenance suggest cultural values that characterize one set of beliefs about authenticity (Attfield, 2000).

In terms of the tourist object, Bunn (2000) suggested we move beyond concentrating on the object and consider how the object was made and who made it. The desires of the tourist should also be considered. Belief systems negotiated among maker, market, object, and tourist contribute to questions of authenticity. Often in our group, objects that were sought after shared characteristics of being made by hand from local materials. The maker should be local as well, and it would be even better if the maker could be met. These qualities support Attfield's (2000)contention that "authenticity is characterised as a desire for an encounter with a raw sense of reality that has not been contaminated by artificial refinement" (p. 97).

Whether a result of being contaminated by marketing or mass production, being in the presence of the one-and-only, particular object seemed to carry weight in determining the authentic for our group. Many of the objects purchased, however, were originals of a kind. For instance, at one market many in our group bought colorful oversized handbags with stitched beading. Each was different, but followed a style. These bags appeared to be purposefully made for tourists but used techniques indigenous to the area. Congdon and Blandy (2001) posed the question: "Does it become fake when it is created and sold to tourists?" (p. 269). Bunn (2000) suggested this kind of question about authenticity should raise others:

> Why is it that embodied handicraft work, integrity, beautiful and functional aspects of work, and collecting are important? We must ask not just 'What is authenticity?'—but, 'Why is authenticity important?' (p. 192)

These questions should prompt a dialectic approach when considering the material culture of tourist objects. In doing so the "critical exploration cannot just reflect on personal memories, it must also look at the disposition of our social memories" (Congdon, et al., 2005, p. 33). An attempt to understand conceptions of authenticity in this way revealed to our group the complexity of attempting to make meaning from the globalized/tribalized contexts of our experiences.

My fellow traveling art educators sought the elusive authentic in their purchases. In talking about the objects, overriding and overlapping trends emerged as the basis for our group's conception of authenticity. Take for instance Rachel Plante's account of why she purchased a particular music CD:

> I want to meet the person who made it and talk to them. Even the CD that we bought: I bought the one from the musician that I could talk to. I see it as an opportunity for a personal connection between two people. In part being an artist and then visiting artisans and knowing what it means to make something and knowing how important that is to me. And meeting someone who understands that—the people we meet—make me want to support them and show appreciation for the work they're doing and the beauty. (personal communication, September 30, 2008)

This idea of meeting the maker, knowing the hand that created the work, and connecting with another maker in the process of purchasing an object seemed important to many in the group. Jean Wallace also found this important as she recounted her purchase of some jewelry in the market:

> I was ready to walk away. The little girl, she saw me looking at the earrings and got the mirror and held them up to me. She really captured my attention. Then I noticed who I assumed was her grandmother, an elder, and I did not like what the little girl was showing me, and I asked the grandmother, "What do you think?" I held up a different pair, and she showed me this pair, and I asked how much, and they were a dollar. Dan, a dollar. So it's not about the money, and they are beautiful, and I could always give them to someone. So no sweat: easy to carry, pretty, could go for anybody, and I liked the people. And now I think they are my two favorite things from the trip. I wear these all the time. (personal communication, January 30, 2009)

Jean, and most others, consciously tried to be aware of their impulsivity—to counteract it in a way—not to be wasteful but to be purposeful in their purchases. Jean's story includes her criteria for making such a purchase and the unintended consequence. The earrings remind her of the little girl, of the wise elder making the jewelry, of the market, and of her good fortune. These two stories of the musician and his CD and the little girl selling her elder's jewelry illustrate a conception of authenticity that one of the other travelers and professors, Lois Hetland, puts into context:

> There's another thing I'm looking for in objects and that is the hand. The hand to me represents the individual human being, and I want something that is unique. I do not want to come back to the States to find that I could have gotten it around the corner at a curio shop. I certainly do not want to get something that's manufactured. If I can get it somewhere else, I do not want to get it in Ecuador. I want to get in Ecuador what you can only get in Ecuador. That's my goal. And I think that says about me that I value the person; I value one-on-one relationships. I'm happiest with my friends when I have a one-on-one relationship with them, with a lot of them. If I'm in a group I want a one-on-one relationship with each member of the group. (personal communication, December 18, 2008)

In these cases, authenticity becomes a metaphor that unites object, maker, and buyer. As quoted previously: "a coalescence of mind, body and object" (Knappett, 2005, p. 34). The metaphoric reality exists within a globalized/tribalized context that impacts the tourists' rejection of the manufactured object and the desire for relationships. Lois Hetland connects these conditions of authenticity within this context to the identity of self.

Using our group's experiences of purchasing tourist objects in Ecuador as examples reveals a metaphoric reality. The globalized/tribalized context of this reality impacts conceptions of authenticity and appears to enhance a desire for the authentic. Attfield (2000) called this "the hidden wild side of material culture where it is possible to see how people use things to come to terms with the apparently relentless change imposed by modernisation" (pp. 173-174). And within this modern condition we attempt to form our self- and group-identities and cultures. The study of this, through material culture, calls for a hybridized approach.

HYBRIDITY

Material culture studies and contemporary art practice share a propensity for hybridity. Many researchers in material culture studies advocate for an interdisciplinary, horizonatalizing approach to methodological choices in the field (e.g., Appadurai, 1996; Attfield, 2000; Knappett, 2005). Bringing together often-disparate approaches, fields, disciplines, and methodologies attests to the complex networks involved in studying material culture. The networks of relationships throughout the phenomena under inquiry require novelty and innovation during exploration. A parallel may be drawn to the processes of collage and bricolage in contemporary art. In *Artforum* magazine, White (2009) summarizes the history and resurgence of collage in his article "Cut and Paste." Collage has been deployed as a method for political protest and for mass marketing. Moving within and among these poles, collage has become "a common and essential form of rethinking, repositioning, and reworking media" (p. 211). Material culture studies may also be considered a rethinking, repositioning, and reworking of content and processes in art education. Conducting material culture studies as a contemporary artistic act raises excitement for those of us eager to continue to cross-fertilize our research and artistic selves.

Hybridization and the concept of a metaphoric reality find their everyday home in the lives of youth who regularly sample and remix media and cultures to create identity. Congdon and Blandy (2001) considered this youth culture phenomena in which everything that has gone before may be made new again as "subverting the importance of singularity as they simultaneously seek authenticity in their own lives" (p. 274). This, again, highlights the tension and opportunity for creating identity within globalized/tribalized contexts. Other examples of this search for identity include the popular social networking site Facebook

TABLE 2

GLOBALIZED	IDENTITY	TRIBALIZED
Macro Scale	Personal	Micro Scale
Reducing Trade	Social	Local Resources
Barriers	Malleable	Communal System
Integration	Plurocultural	Interdependence
Reduction of Poverty	Contextual	Cultural Heritage
Homogenization	Need to Belong	Craft
Focus on Large Groups	Geographically Interdependent	Focus on Small Groups
Geographically Independent	Embodied	Geographically Dependent
Technology-Driven	Expressive	Embodied
Disguised as Freedom		Disguised as Truth
Economics-Centered	Relationship-Centered	Human-Centered

and other, lesser-known sites such as Polyvore.com. These sites offer opportunities for social connections. One could argue the degree to which these sites offer relationships, but they include story creation, links with others, and a hybridized approach to identity formation whether through creating or consuming. Perhaps this phenomenon of hybridizing our self-identity is nothing new. However, the way in which it is being created, the number of resources from which to sample or re-mix, and the cultural variety from which to choose present an array of issues, concerns, opportunities, and paradoxes—all ripe for a transdisciplinary confluence of material culture studies and contemporary art practice (Table 2).

Recognizing the Metaphoric Reality in Art Education

The art educators from the US who traveled through the Sierra region of Ecuador purchased tourist objects that offered an opportunity to explore a metaphoric reality. Objects became relational hubs and catalysts for a dialectic concerning identity. Being removed from hometowns and immersing ourselves in simultaneously different and similar globalized/tribalized cultures heightened sensitivities in the search for the authentic and an understanding of authenticity. The trip itself served as a metaphor in which we came to understand Appadurai's (1996) proposition:

> What is new is that this is a world in which both points of departure and points of arrival are in cultural flux, and thus the search for steady points of reference, as critical life choices are made, can be very difficult. It is in this atmosphere that the invention of tradition (and of ethnicity, kinship, and other identity markers) can become slippery, as the search for certainties is regularly frustrated by the fluidities of transnational communication. (p. 44)

Within this fluidity, art educators have a unique opportunity to develop a critical citizenry capable of making critical life choices, and who create culture and identity. Doing this requires "promoting the investigation and appreciation of the broadest possible range of objects, artifacts, spaces, expressions, and experiences" (Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p. 246). The tourist objects from Ecuador serve as examples of this promotion.

Two articles in *Art Education* magazine highlight other examples of using concepts from material culture studies to develop lesson plans. Burkhart's (2006) use of the bicycle and Feldhusen's (2008) focus on decorative arts collections encourage students to explore identities of self and culture through objects. "The study of material forms and objects is important because they are pervasive and they embody and perpetuate ideas about cultures, regions, religions, nations, and individual and collective identities" (Burkhart, p. 33). These lesson plans call on students to consider the social life of objects that we create through our relationships with them. "Through the things we make and produce

we commemorate ourselves, mark life's passages, and establish and signify social relations" (Feldhusen, p. 25). The questioning of social values that these lessons encourage promote the development of a critical citizenry required for a healthy democracy.

The role of the art educator that results from the just noted approach to material culture has the potential to profoundly impact the development of self-, social-, and cultural identities. If our identities are, in large part, developed through our relationships with objects, then an education in art should foster a critical awareness of identity development so that students may make the critical judgments necessary to navigate an increasingly globalized/tribalized world. If our relationships with objects exist in a metaphoric reality, then an education in art becomes a necessity for a critical citizenry since art practices are inherently metaphoric (Efland, 2002; Serig, 2005, 2006). While metaphor abounds in all disciplines, the arts live in them, embrace them, and create them to generate new understandings of ourselves and the world around us.

Exploring the relationships of a group of art educators to the tourist objects purchased in Ecuador offered an opportunity to clarify values and beliefs, to raise questions about social and cultural systems, and to develop new empathies for divergent viewpoints. Material culture in art education provides the same environment for exploration. In addition, Congdon and Blandy (2001) noted that "Art educators will also work with students to develop the courage to cross socio-political borders for the purpose of increased understanding, helping them to learn multiple ways of participating in discussions associated with public interest" (p. 276). Using objects in art education to develop and expand social awareness, identities, and a critical citizenry presents a network of relationships in which material culture studies and contemporary art practice offer direction and guidance.

CONCLUSION

I propose a three-phased cluster of concepts within which the artist/educator/researcher may consider material culture. From this kindred cluster of concepts, a hybridized approach to material culture studies within the practices of art, teaching, learning, and research may be operationalized. This grouping synthesizes the findings from this study of material culture and material culture studies. Within a material culture framework, constructed meaning is ***relationship-centered, object-mediated,*** and ***metaphor-created.***

Accounts of the purchasing of the tourist objects inevitably included human relationships as part of the transaction, memory of the place, and/or connection to the maker. These relationships influenced notions of authenticity. And as Lois Hetland revealed, the human relationships surrounding an object also reflect personality. As Attfield (2000) identified, "The paradox of individuality is that it can only be constructed within a social framework" (p. 141). This further presents a paradox in material culture studies: in effect, the study of objects de-materializes the world.

In other words, objects mediate meaning. And this meaning reveals itself through a study of the particular. In this case collections of tourist objects offered a point of departure for considering conceptual frameworks surrounding material culture. "At best [collections] may represent a compromise between internal and external factors, and even when a collection transforms itself into a discourse addressed to others, it continues to be first and foremost a discourse addressed to oneself" (Baudrillard, 1968/2005, p. 111). In this quote Baudrillard identifies the object-mediated search for identity within globalized/tribalized influences.

This mediation among relationships, and between relationships and objects, is created through metaphor. Metaphors defy empirical or logical truth, often establishing worlds through stories, imagining themselves into reality (Romanyshyn, 2001). A metaphor-created reality sits well with the holistic approach offered by material culture studies. The narrative

form often accompanying metaphor provides linkages between the concrete (e.g., objects) and the abstract (e.g., relationships). Jean's earrings are no longer earrings, and John's statuette is no longer a statuette.

The development of identities (i.e., social, cultural, and individual) depends more and more on the use of imagination in everyday life. Including an emphasis on material culture within art education develops this imagination that crucially impacts the development of a critical citizenry necessary for a healthy democracy. The ability to consciously and critically navigate the development of identity within an increasingly globalized/tribalized world may be most developed through an education in art. In addition, art education may rediscover its relevance in contemporary contexts by including a focus on material culture that is relationship-centered, object-mediated, and metaphor-created.

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ENDNOTE

1 Romanyshyn (2001) characterized metaphoric reality as psychological life:

> The recovery of psychological life as radically historical is also the recovery of psychological life as another reality between the material fact and the mental idea. Psychological life is not a reality inside humanity divorced from the historical events and cultural conditions which surround it on the outside. It is, on the contrary, these events and conditions. But, on the other hand, it is not these events and conditions; it is given through them as a reflection. They are the mirrors through which psychological life appears.... Psychological life as a reflection is a reality between the material and the mental, that is, a metaphorical reality.... The recovery of the psychological life as a metaphorical reality leads us into a way of life which is unfamiliar. It leads us into a domain of living where story rather than fact or idea informs experience, and where the imaginal understanding of the human heart supersedes the empirical understanding of the observing eye, and the logical understanding of the human mind. (p. xxii)

Material Culture in Contemporary Art and Design ■ NANCY HOUSE

A green sofa from the Salvation Army store was bought and photographed. Thus began "an infinite loop of consumerism." (Bingaman-Burt, 2005)

The everyday objects that artists and designers reference in their work reflect the culture through which they move, as well as the private and public spaces of their lives. The work of artists and designers is material culture. They paint pictures, produce sculptures, and design places, logos and furniture that reflect their culture. They make "things" that in turn "make" people by influencing their purchases, shaping their ideas, as well as their perception of the world and understandings of people. It is a recursive process as artists and designers are both generators and choosers (Gell, 1998; Miller, 2005). Thus reiterating Pinney (2005) who believed in the "dialectical process of (what heuristically we might term) subjects making objects making subjects" (p. 267).

Material culture studies looks at the relationship of artists and designers to the everyday culture in which he or she lives. In this chapter I will look back to illustrate how the objects made by artists and designers reflect their culture utilizing the technologies and processes available to them. By looking at one contemporary artist we see how this process is continued, yet modified based on new technologies and materials. Kate Bingaman-Burt overtly consumes and explores the cultural artifacts of her time. She makes art based on everyday objects, and her art becomes consumable goods. Designations of fine and decorative arts become passé as she is both artist and designer.

DEFINITIONS

Material culture is a multivalent concept that is not located in any one discipline. "History, archeology sociology and cultural studies, anthropology, geography, museology literary, religious and psychoanalytical studies are just some of the areas that have focused on something called material culture, as a particular way of engaging their disciplines" (Attfield, 1999, p. 373). "Material culture is heterogeneous, and ambiguous... with many roots and different connotations" (Tilley et al., 2006, p. 3). Bonstingl (1996) divides culture into two parts: the material, consisting of the objects and artifacts; and the non-material, consisting of the values and ideas of a society associated with the artifact. Design historian Judith Attfield (1999), focusing her attention on the object, wrote, "Material culture studies concentrates on the process of meaning acquisition and locates the site of such transactions in the object itself." (p. 376). Kader (2003) stated that "Material culture studies is a term used to describe all artifacts, past and present, big and small, beautiful and ugly, valuable and useless, simple and complex, hand-made and manufactured that are created, used and modified by humans" (p. 20). Archer and Hilty (1997) question how to define an object. For Tilley (2006), materiality refers to something that has physical and/or corporeal substance, as opposed to the spiritual.

Susanne Kuchler (2005) and Daniel Miller (2005) move beyond the objects and artifacts of a culture by including the ephemeral, imaginary, biological, and theoretical because visual forms are symbols that represent immaterial or spiritual beliefs. Technology use has created another divide or category that requires images to be considered. Thought conducts itself through or by way of things. Thomas Schlereth (1985) considers the term *material culture* to have greater specificity than designations like "things," "objects," or "artifacts" (p. 2) in that it uses formal and functional values of individual objects along with other pertinent historical information to investigate the belief systems of a particular community or society defined by geography and time. In relation to Schlereth's definition, anthropologist Alfred Gell (1998) believes that "the nature of the art object is a function of the social-relational

matrix in which it is embedded. It has no 'intrinsic' nature, independent of the relational context" (p. 7).

Art has different purposes including didactic, religious, pleasure, and beauty, as well as the attempt by the Dada movement to negate all meaning in art. Regardless of purpose, artists/designers incorporate the material culture of the time in their work products, and in turn influence the ensuing material culture milieu. Steiner (2001) refers to it as the "border zone, a space of 'negotiation, arbitrariness and liminality'"... In the rapid transnational flow of material culture, a flow that animates the world of material objects, the border zone offers a period of suspended animation—a liminal space between two worlds where category alternation and conceptual shifts are poised to occur" (p. 209). Lefebvre and Levich (1987) wrote that "Every complex 'whole' from the smallest tool to the greatest works of art and learning, therefore possesses a symbolic value linking them to meaning at its most vast; to divinity and humanity, power and wisdom, good and evil, happiness and misery, the perennial and the ephemeral" (p. 8). According to Lefebvre, the everyday is monotonous—the artist gives meaning to the mundane.

Material culture studies can include every aspect of the way people imagine, create, use, and interpret their physical environment. It involves the analysis of a domain of things. It considers the object as well as the beliefs and ideas that are represented by that object; the political and social symbolism, the relationship to linguistic narrative, the personal expression, and the consumption and commodity. The object can be as significant as the inlaid jeweled, gold throne from the tomb of King Tutankhamen, or as personal as a green sofa purchased from the Salvation Army. "Much of material culture studies is concerned with deepening our insight into how persons make things and things make persons" (Tilley et al., 2006, p. 2). The relationship between objects, both the significant and the everyday and their consumption and use, is the focus of material culture studies.

LOOKING BACK

Artists consistently recorded the everyday objects and relations that illustrated as well as produced their material culture. Early cave walls have images of spears, people, and animals. The depictions show the system and social relations between the various forms. Roman wall paintings represent everyday objects, food, dishware, garden spaces, and people engaged in social interactions. Art and design history typically deal with the everyday. The items seen in art and design images could be factual recordings, symbols, or metaphors. Regardless of intent, these images from different time periods record how people dressed, how they worked and played, and the objects and ideas they valued.

Grassby (2005) wrote that art imagery "sheds light on how people understood themselves" (p. 594). The use of everyday objects in art and design continues to "shed light" on how people understand themselves, and plays a role in contemporary aesthetic discourse. The contemporary style in interior and product design began to take off at about the same time that artists and critics of the Independent Group, a branch of the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, staged their final and largest exhibition, entitled This is Tomorrow, at the Whitechapel Gallery in east London during summer 1956. The 1956 exhibit by Group Two included an abundant collection of cinematic characters, new technologies, and self-indulgent figures. Statements by critics Reyner Banham (1960) and Lawrence Alloway (1956) as well as writings by Richard Hamilton (1957), John McHale (1969), and the Smithsons (1973) would compare the popular arts, industrial design, and the fine arts in their aesthetics, use, and content with the realization that they were all cultural productions in an industrial civilization, although involving different media and audiences.

In 1917, Marcel Duchamp selected and purchased a urinal from a plumbing supply store. He turned it upside down, signed it R. Mutt, and dated it 1917. It was referred to as a *readymade.* Thus began an overt appropriation of the everyday for use as an object of art that

continues in various guises by 21st-century artists and designers. They intervene "in design by modifying ordinary objects to make them useless and thereby comment on the nature of materiality" (Dant, 1999, p. 135).

Post World War II prosperity played a role in developing a "consumer society" that was reflected in emerging art movements. The American Pop artists of the early 1960s, particularly Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, Tom Wesselman, and James Rosenquist, established a strong rapport with everyday consumer products and with figures of the popular media. These artists captured in their paintings or art objects the sense of comfort, convenience, appetite, and fashion in well-known and advertised products and the glamour or attraction felt for popular figures in the media. Warhol, Oldenburg, and Rosenquist document the sociological phenomenon of consumerism. Their work reflects the purchase and the advertisement of goods and a move from aestheticism. In a lecture to the College Art Association, Roy Lichtenstein (1982) said, "Commercial art is not our art, it is the subject matter of our art and in that sense it is nature; but it is considered completely at odds with the major direction of art during and since the Renaissance and particularly at odds with our directly predating movements—abstract expressionism" (p. 102).

The artists of the 1950s and '60s practiced a form of consumption and appropriation in their works, as they constructed the materiality of the products and the glimpses of their use, possession, and systems of commerce. The simulation of everyday reality culminated during 1964 in the art objects of Warhol or Artschwager and the environments of Oldenburg, and that same year the display of new editions of several earlier readymades by Marcel Duchamp, who was an important source of inspiration among artists of the Pop movement. Marcel Duchamp did not consider the readymades art. Duchamp questioned, "Can one make works which are not works of art?" (Molesworth, 1998, p. 57). The idea was to find an object that had no attraction whatsoever from the aesthetic angle. Manufactured articles were reproduced, and therefore they were impersonal. Consideration of material objects shifted from one of aesthetics to one of perception and interpretation.

By 1962, an international pop culture coalesced around art, music, and fashion that was more concerned with image, attitude, and affiliation than with style, social position, medium, or consumer theory. In 1965, Mary Quant's Bazaar and Terrence Conran's Habitat, both in London, were associated with Pop fashion and design and responded to the social preference of youth for simple, practical, and novel designs. The contemporary style of the 1950s slowly evolved in the 1960s in American and Europe to reflect the period's fascination with portability, efficiency, and independence in a range of tableware, fixtures, and furniture of geometric character that reached new production standards for polished stainless steel and molded plastics. Innovations in technology remained a key factor in competition throughout the decade.

Nouveau Réalisme, or New Realism, a poetic recycling of reality, was founded in October 1960 with a joint declaration whose signatories were Yves Klein, Arman, Francois Dufrêne, Raymond Hains, Pierre Restany, Daniel Spoerri, Jean Tinguely, and Jacques de la Villeglé; in 1961 they were joined by César, Mimmo Rotella, then Niki de Saint Phalle and Gerard Deschamps. These artists declared that they had come together on the basis of a new awareness of their "collective singularity." For all the diversity of their plastic language, they did indeed perceive a common basis for their work, this being a method of direct appropriation of reality equivalent, in the terms used by Pierre Restany, to a "poetic recycling of urban, industrial and advertising reality" (Morriset, 2007, p. 76). Arman and Daniel Spoerri constructed accumulations of real objects that were used or discarded. Arman's *accumulations, poubelles,* and *portraits-robots* were chance arrangements of like material objects in shallow space. In an exhibition Le Plein, staged in Iris Clert's Paris gallery in 1960 at the time when the group was founded, Arman completely filled the exhibition space with junk.

From the same time period, Spoerri similarly emphasized real manufactured objects that were used, as in his *tableaux pièges*, or snare pictures. Spoerri planned a meal and invited guests to dine. The guests left after eating the meal. Spoerri then glued the remains of the meal, including tableware and food containers, to wooden plaques in the order that real patrons abandoned them at the conclusion of a meal. There was no aesthetic rearranging of items. The plaques, as true remnants of the material culture of the family table, were hung on the gallery wall. He referred to his *tableaux-pieges* as an openness to chance situations. "He sought to focus attention on situations and areas of daily life that are little noticed, if at all." They record the transient and mundane (Malone, 2005).

Other artists like César in France or John Chamberlain in America dealt with the destruction of objects at the end of their cycle of use. César's individual rectangular bales of different weights and sizes represented readymade compressions of vehicles and other metal objects from a Paris junkyard. Chamberlain's individual assemblages, on the other hand, were more unique and identifiable in their parts since the metal pieces were selected, hammered, and welded together by the artist himself. As with César's *Compressions*, they suggested the limited life span and violent end of the manufactured object.

Fluxus was perhaps the most democratic art movement of the 1960s for its belief that all objects and events from everyday life should be included as art while the creators and audience could include anyone. In addition to its concerts, festivals, and performances, several Fluxus artists founded small shops where a variety of gadgets and objects were made for distribution and sale. Pamphlets, flyers, menus, radios, flags, clocks, medals, cans, and pieces of furniture were several types of consumer products "published" by member artists. Fluxus *galleries* could comprise individual material objects such as hats, bottles, or other personal possessions. The plastic and wooden *fluxboxes* for distribution contained, games, household items, film tape, cards, and miscellaneous objects contributed by the 9 to 13 artists who contributed to the project in different locations. In Fluxus activities of the 1960s by George Brecht, George Maciunas, and others, everyday household, leisure, musical, and personal objects were brought to life through their anticipated role and human interaction in the simulated world of assemblages and performances. Yoko Ono was one of the founders of the Fluxus movement at the beginning of the 1960s. Frank (2006) wrote that Ono and her fellow Fluxus members "elevated the insubstantial to monumental status, allowing us to contemplate the magic of the ordinary, as well as to comprehend the ordinariness of the seemingly profound."

The simulationist point of view during the middle 1980s includes the art of Jeff Koons, Haim Steinbach and others. The 1986 exhibition Endgame: Reference and Simulation in Recent Painting and Sculpture, which was held in Boston at the Institute of Contemporary Art, put the new movement on the map. There was a sense of "complicit" participation in the cultural production of objects of desire through the art objects' advantageous point of view and finish. Group members were exploring the return of the object in the larger context of the contemporary material world and with respect to larger audiences of consumer culture that came to blur distinctions of high and low art. Koons and Peter Halley were fascinated with audience participation in the new art which encouraged a more public dialogue on cultural experiences. Artists presented installations and individual exhibits representing interior furnishings, personal products, and other things from the current material world. The intent was to show objects "midway between the inaccessible and the available" like "brokers of desire" (Bourriaud, 2000, p. 21).

The different positions of artists and designers point to an aestheticization of ordinary life that occurs when individuals are in the presence of material possessions that are culturally valued as commodities. In acknowledging the informed, knowing, and active consumer of cultural studies, one can view consumption as an act of appropriation, a creative re-use of an object already existing in culture. As with Michel de Certeau's (1984) seminal work,

The Practice of Everyday: Life, appropriation can be seen as an independent and creative act of expression that transforms the uses of things in the specific context of everyday activities. Appropriation is an individual activity that personalizes material objects and at the same time is rooted in the production of culture. Although an activity of independence, appropriation satisfies basic desires for security, competition, personal growth, and social integration. The question has shifted from one of making something new to how to make something new out of what we have (Bourriaud, 2000). Hollein (2003) wrote that "We can observe a changing of the contents and aestheticising of even the most profane, basic products, which results in the fact that even the purchase of the most everyday articles becomes a wistful act of personal self definition" (Grunenberg & Hollein, 2003, p. 14).

Contemporary designers and artists share an interest in mass-produced products at the level that they are consumed. This applies to the attractiveness of a product on store shelves as well as its function and meanings as an owned possession. The product designer responds to the global marketplace by being more actively involved in production and consumption. To further understand the useful and visible patterns of consumer culture and its lifestyles in the advanced stages of consumption, Mika Pantzar (1997) argues that we must recognize the standardization and routinization of both technology and everyday life which occurs when highly developed products interact with other material objects and activities in our lives. The global information society of the 1990s is described by Scott Lash (2002) as a structured, three-dimensional, and tactile culture or system that surrounds us and is lived in rather than represented in a separate realm. By participating in this system, the consumer comfortable with purchased possessions can to some degree live through them and use them to plot a new direction through self-reflection and criticism of one's lifestyle. In this way, the knowing and imaginative consumer is like an artist who tries to understand and recreate the world around him.

AN ARTIST TODAY

The readymades of Duchamp, the situations created by Arman and Spoerri, and the Pop Art of Warhol and Lichtenstein can be seen as the ancestors of Kate Bingaman-Burt's work as an artist and graphic designer. In 2002, she purchased a green sofa from the Salvation Army that cost her $30. For the next 28 months she documented her everyday purchases with a photograph of the item and a drawing of the charge receipt. Kate recorded all of her purchases; the mundane, everyday objects that people use such as toothbrushes, cups of coffee, meals at McDonalds,® or a six-pack of beer. Photos were saved in glassine envelopes, along with the sales slip for the object or event. On slips of paper she recorded thoughts about some of the purchases. For instance, she wrote,

> May 25th, 2003 @3:59 p.m. Russ Market 17th & Washington. Assorted items for Jenny and Boz's BBQ. $17.00. Rating: good. I bought the cactus for Jenny and Boz because it looked like it was being friendly and saying hi. I am easily amused. (Wolgamott, 2003, p. K1)

The resulting photos and drawings were uploaded to her website, www.obsessiveconsumption.com (Bingaman-Burt, 2005). The Internet became her exhibition space, and images were available for purchase, individually printed by Kate on a variety of consumer goods such as posters or t-shirts. Objects were transformed and returned to the marketplace. The infinite loop of the making, consuming, and re-forming of objects in a material world has been completed illustrating the "dialectical and re-cursive relationship between person and things" (Tilley, 2006, p. 4).

Kate said that she is moved by the "life as art" philosophy of the Situationists (Bingaman-Burt, 2005). "I created Obsessive Consumption, the brand, the company and the website, to showcase my love/hate relationship with money, shopping, branding, credit cards, celebrity,

advertising and marketing" (Bingaman-Burt, 2005). Her work comments on the nature of the individual in a consumption-driven society as it questions how our purchases define us and why we purchase what we do.

Art critic L. Kent Wolgamott (2003) wrote that Kate's "work follows that of Joseph Beuys, who believed that an artist's life was a creative act and recording that life was as valuable as creating an object."(p. 2K). Kate acknowledges the influence of the photographs of Eugene Atget, Robert Evans, and Bernice Abbott in the way "merchandise becomes art in them, how people use merchandise to express themselves." (Wolgamott, 2003, p. 2K). Everyday vernacular objects are purchased and photographed, and when she does this, she is making these objects important, she is pointing them out, and they become significant when they are exhibited and viewed by others. Gell would say she is giving them agency. Connections are made, memories recalled, as Lefebvre has suggested, in *Critique of Everyday Life,* it is art that reveals the everyday. Kate said:

> People identify themselves with objects. We as a society participate with signs and a network of signs and not with each other. It is our interactions that are displaced and suppressed. Consumers don't just buy a product. They buy into the mindset that is sold with it. My consumption is boring and predictable. (Bingaman-Burt, 2005)

Kate Bingaman-Burt illustrates, is a symptom of, represents, and re-contextualizes artifacts found in her material culture. Her works of art and design literally and symbolically represent a material culture. By looking at her website, and seeing what she has purchased and documented through photographs and drawn charge receipts, we gain a picture of Kate. It becomes a visual diary, and the viewer can speculate about how she understands herself. She has created a material culture, with her ideas and beliefs evident in them.

Kate consumes and produces material culture, and her explorations explicate the dialectic that exists between art, design, craft, and material culture. She appropriates ready-made items to form her identity, and then incorporates them into her own work as personal expression. Kate consumes; by consuming, she is an artist as defined by Duchamp who believed that "anything the artist does is art" (Chipp, 1984, p. 393). She is part of the interaction between art and design that continued throughout the development of machine-manufactured objects for use. Early in the 20th century, art began to recycle design when the Dadaists renamed objects of industrial production by signing and displaying them as "readymade" art. The surrealists intervened in design by modifying ordinary objects to make them useless, and thereby comment on the nature of materiality (Dant, 1999, p. 135).

CONCLUSION

There is a struggle to keep the arts of commerce separate from the arts of the mind, but in reality art takes place in the social economy (Lumpkin, 1999). The art and design disciplines are dialects of one another. One morphs into the other, and they both reside in the larger concept of material culture. "While design and objects of material culture have traditionally been considered secondary to the high arts, since the beginning of 20th century artists and designers have blurred these distinctions in their melding of aesthetics and function, of art and everyday life" (Krens, 1998, p. 49). A urinal is exhibited; remains from a meal are glued down then exhibited; a large brillo box is constructed; and a green sofa is purchased, used, photographed, and the images exhibited. According to Duchamp, it is "the viewers who make the paintings" (Bourriaud, 2000, p. 14.). Is it art or is it design? African art dealer Pierre Amrouche states, "One has the right to look at objects as one wishes" (Steinglass, 2002, p. 106). As artists and designers before her, Kate consumes goods, makes "art," and her art becomes consumable goods. Material culture is consumed and produced, and the loop is closed.

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The Art of Collecting, Material Culture, and Place-Based Education

■ MARK A. GRAHAM

I grew up collecting, and remain a collector today. I collected rocks, fossils, and beetles, among other things. I collected the names of prehistoric animals as if they were Latin poetry. I handled, arranged, rearranged, organized, labeled, and classified. I displayed my objects on shelves and dreamed of pristine glass display cases. The quest to collect brought me to dusty river bottoms, trilobite beds, and rotting logs. I was fascinated, even obsessed, with the beauty and mystery of these objects and the stories they had to tell. I found kindred collections in the local university geology museum where I first noticed that each object, according to scientific custom, was attached to a specific place. I also became acquainted with the allure of the glass vitrine.

My childhood collections came from the places where I grew up. They were collections of desert rocks, insects, and plants. Like the collections in the local geology museum, they were closely tied to the natural history of these places. Later, as an artist, I studied myriad collections of art, but usually focused on the art object rather than on the character of the collection or the nature of collecting. When I became acquainted with the work of Fred Wilson (Corrin, 1994) and Mark Dion (Putnam, 2001), my views of collections changed dramatically.

Fred Wilson disrupts the authority of the museum by remixing and relabeling collections so that the hidden acts of revealing and concealing became visible. Mark Dion uses the medium of the collection to comment on our assumptions about scientific objectivity and our relationships with the non-human world (Putnam, 2001). Their artwork validated my lifelong urge to collect as a legitimate form of artistic expression that has important associations with the peculiarities of places and communities.

Creating a collection can be a significant form of artistic expression with many connections to material culture, places, and communities. As an embodiment of material culture, collections can illuminate local ecological and human communities. Collecting can be a form of memory, recollection, or knowledge. Collections are culturally mediated constructions that have much to teach about the relationships among art, science, natural history, places, and material culture. They are rich texts that comprise significant ways of understanding the world (Martin, 1999). This chapter examines how places and material culture are approached through the study of collecting and collections. Places are an important, but often overlooked, aspect of human culture (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008). Human progress that emphasizes the domination of nature has devastated many parts of the earth and created environmental conditions characterized by pollution, depletion of natural resources, climate change, threatened biodiversity, and diminishing wilderness. The economics of globalization and myriad other factors have eroded connections to local communities, creating a sense of rootlessness and alienation from public purposes. Mainstream educational reform in the United States is characterized by decontextualized curricula that ignore the peculiarities of places in order to standardize the experiences of students (Darling-Hammond & McCloskey, 2008). The isolation of schooling from local human and ecological communities diminishes the public, democratic responsibilities of schools and renders students passive by dismissing their potential contributions to the places they inhabit. But the character of schooling changes when local communities and places become the focus of education. The confluence of place-based pedagogies and material culture studies within the medium of collections creates rich contexts for personal artistry and suggests many possibilities for an art education that is concerned with local human and ecological communities.

Place-based art educators embrace the work of outsider art, folk art, naïve artists, vernacular artists, and the artifacts of everyday life and visual culture. This includes the often-overlooked artisans and artists who live close by and whose work is collected in homes or yards (Ball & Lai, 2006). For example, their study can include local traditions and cultural life gathered through interviews and the collecting of artifacts, local gardens, quilt-makers, and other artists in the community (Bastos, 2002; Hatton, 2005; Knapp, 2008). Place-based pedagogies and material culture studies create rich contexts for art education that is responsive to local culture and ecology. This chapter considers museum collections, religious reliquaries, the *Wunderkammer* cabinet of curiosities, and artist collections from the vantage point of how collecting, places, and culture converge. An example will illustrate how material culture studies and place-based pedagogy can provide content and context for university art education students. This project focused on Fremont Culture rock art within the Great Basin desert and drew on the disciplines of art history, nature study, and archaeology with an emphasis on collecting and collections as forms of expression and as means to understand culture, community, and ecology. A critical place-based pedagogy provides meaningful content for art education by focusing on community, ecology, natural history, and the local contexts of students' lives (Graham, 2007a; Gruenewald, 2003; Smith, 2002).

MATERIAL CULTURE AND COLLECTING

Materiality is an integral dimension of culture and social existence. There is a dialectical, recursive interaction among persons and things that influences how we think, act, and construct our sense of self. The biographies of people and things are intertwined. People construct their identity through their interaction with things and without material culture we could not know ourselves (Tilley, 2006). Objects are a kind of text that can reveal the cultural layering and meaning of contemporary life. Material culture studies have a cultural anthropological perspective that exposes students to multiple disciplines and environments with a focus on objects and the ideas that surround them (Bolin & Blandy, 2003). Whereas visual culture studies, informed by critical theory, sees images as sites of ideological struggle, material culture studies also includes ordinary utilitarian objects as cultural markers that are rich with meaning. In spite of the discourse that surrounds these artifacts, the primary authority continues to reside in the object. The symbolic, signifying character of electronic and two-dimensional media is typically the focus of visual culture studies. Material culture studies extend this interest to the physical, material nature of objects and the human practices that surround them. This is an approach that is inherently multi-sensory and multi-disciplinary, with its grounding focus coming from the material characteristics and functionality of objects (Duncum, 2005).

A rich locus for material culture is found in collecting and collections. Collecting is a recurring cultural activity in many times and places throughout history. Collections of artifacts were and continue to be a way to render the invisible visible, and to bring exotic realms of other people and other worlds into the realm of the knowable (Buchli, 2002). Contemporary art practice often reflects the inter-disciplinary approach associated with material culture studies. Some artists perform the roles of collectors, archaeologists, ethnographers, or community organizers (Duncum, 2005). In the quest to gather what is mysterious or unique and bring order to the infinitude of existence, collectors construct a text of relationships among artifacts and an artistry of objects that reveals much about culture, place, and society.

THE CULTURE OF THE LOCAL AND PLACE-BASED PEDAGOGY

The local is a layered location replete with human histories and memories where nature, culture, history, and ideology intersect (Lippard, 1997). Connecting to a place can involve the archaic quest for centering and orienting toward the *axis mundi*. It can also involve archaeologists' meticulous excavation and collecting of objects in order to read the layers of

a place, sifting for evidence of history, culture, society, and ecology. For archaeologists, the meaning of any object is in its relationship to other objects within a collection where everything is carefully recorded and counted (Lippard, 1997). Place is a complex intersection of history, natural history, and culture that is often embodied in material culture. Place-based education seeks to replace uniform, externally developed content with curricula that focus on the unique strengths, histories, and characteristics of the local (Smith, 2002). Place-based education emphasizes experiential, multidisciplinary learning that gets students out of the classroom and into local ecological and human communities. Nature study, cultural journalism, community-based learning, and collecting are typical place-based approaches. Collecting and collections can also connect student learning with places, community, ecology, contemporary art, and the study of material culture.

Place-based education has traditionally emphasized ecological and rural contexts but ignored how socio-cultural differences, inequality, and politics contribute to environmental degradation and erosion of community. Likewise, the transformative agenda of critical theory has neglected ecological matters and the local, indigenous traditions that are essential for preserving natural systems (Bowers, 2001; Gruenewald, 2003; Bowers & Apffel-Marglin, 2005). A remedy for this apparent disjunction is a critical pedagogy of place that considers the relationships among cultural, ecological, and political issues. Place-based educators look for teaching and learning that promote care for places and to reconnect learning to community life (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008). Critical place-based pedagogy grounds issues of race, privilege, class, and gender in concrete experiences within local communities and the lives of students (Gruenewald, 2008). A critical pedagogy of place considers the relationships among cultural, ecological, and political issues. Critical place-based pedagogy blends the local and ecological with cultural awareness and social critique by illuminating important relationships between cultural and ecological systems (Ball & Lai, 2006; Gruenewald, 2003). Blending place-based education with critical pedagogy blurs the boundaries between artmaking, social critique, scientific inquiry, and activism. Translated into practice, critical place-based pedagogy can include natural history education, mapmaking, collecting, cultural journalism, and action research (Cameron, 2008; Gruenewald, 2003; Guilfoil, 2000; Hicks & King, 1999; Knapp, 2008). This is an educational approach that is place-based in its insistence on connecting learning to the students' local reality and critical in its investigation of how culture creates boundaries, privilege, power, and inequality (Graham, 2007a). Making local places and material culture a focus of instruction can involve students in many layers of thinking about ecology, community, and artistic heritage as place-based ideas converge with critical theory.

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Collections, including museum collections, can reveal and hide social and cultural histories. Objects have their own language and collecting is a dialect that has its own meanings, narratives, and sense of memory (Bal, 1994). Sacred objects in medieval reliquaries, for example, held deep symbolic value connected to complex religious stories. These objects were encased in shrines where they were catalysts for contemplation and worship. The *Wunderkammer*, European cabinets of curiosities from the 16th to 18th centuries, told stories about the elusive relationship between art and science. They were created to inspire wonder about the mystery inherent in the natural world and suggested that there was a fundamental link between nature and art. The *Wunderkammer*, got impetus from newly discovered treasures from the New World. In some ways, European culture came to know itself and its relationship to the world through a study of the artifacts of the exotic Other gathered into collections. Museums became and continue to be displays of lost or disappearing worlds (Tilley, 2006). In the *Wunderkammer*, each unique and marvelous object held the promise of an ancient body of learning, a lost secret that waited only for the passionate gaze of the collector to

become known. These collections were encyclopedic, with implied links to ancient knowledge. They reflected a fascination with the origins of life and the relationship between reason and magic (Mowries, 2002). Surrealist artists echoed the *Wunderkammer's* juxtaposition of the strange and marvelous by putting objects at the service of dreams, the irrational, and the subconscious. They emphasized the disorder of desire and the irrational shadow cast over the mind by objects (Putnam, 2001). The Surrealist tension between the desire to recapture the past and the impossibility of succeeding found its way into Joseph Cornell's fondness for the esoteric and commonplace as vehicles for poetic associations (McShine & Ades, 1980). The *Wunderkammer* cabinets of curiosity were also ancestors to the modern museum, which still retains the remnants of the symbolic and magical, tempered by dispassionate reason (Buchli, 2002).

The ways objects are gathered into collections and how they are organized, displayed, interpreted, and labeled both illuminate and obscure taken-for-granted assumptions about knowledge, privilege, and culture (Putnam, 2001). Collections in museums have always told ideological stories. Collecting is the material reflection of the kinds of classifications that constitute knowledge and the rules and labels that define social orders. For some collectors, collecting is more than ownership; it reflects the desire to control existence itself (Elsner & Cardinal, 1994). Nineteenth-century Victorians were obsessed with artifacts and material culture, but collecting is found throughout history, from Paleolithic assemblages to Babylonian temple collections. Museums, antique stores, and personal collections provide examples of the interlocking of material culture, history, archaeology, and natural history. The museum gives objects a sense of permanence and weaves them into stories of possession and attachment to places. The art museum has traditionally been the repository of art treasures that define high culture. Many museums, including art museums, also have a strong connection to local culture, history, or natural history. Their purpose revolves around gaining knowledge through collecting, preserving, cataloguing, labeling, and displaying objects that tell stories about places. A museum can create a sense of local, regional, or national identity by defining what is valuable, interesting, and worth saving (Belk, 2006). Museum collections are ideal for the multi-disciplinary and experiential focus of critical place-based teaching. Some museum collections also demonstrate how local heritage and material culture can help communities define their place in the larger world (Utt & Olsen, 2007; Villeneuve & Martin-Hamon, 2007).

INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS

Many people, including artists and children, are avid collectors. Their collections can be a focus for both artmaking and meaningful discussions about visual culture, material culture, community, and nature. The often-overlooked artisans and artists who live close by and whose work is collected in homes or yards are particularly relevant when local places become a focus of study. There is a generosity and optimism in vernacular art in its willingness to offer its inner vision to the outside world. These collections are about the actual places that artists and their audience inhabit (Lippard, 1997). The act of collecting can be seen as a kind of consumerism that envisions the completion of self through the acquisition of objects. However, it can also be viewed as heroic acts of individuality or artistry that rejects materialistic consumerism by removing the object as a circulated commodity and giving it unique status. Collecting does not use up, devour, or consume; instead it is about keeping, preserving, and accumulating. It is the process of selecting, acquiring, and possessing things that are then removed from ordinary use. Individual collections that are obsessively and passionately gathered illustrate the complex relationships with material culture that exist in societies of abundance (Belk, 2006). Many individual collections focus on inconsequential or unconsidered objects without commercial value. These fragments of consumer society echo, mock, invert, and disturb society's insistence that identity and self worth can be acquired through

material goods. Collecting can also be an act of defining identity, a self-defense against the spectacle of commercial consumerism, a nostalgic gathering of the familiar to reassure or shore up a sense of place and value (Martin, 1999). Objects in collections often have symbolic meanings and a history of associations that help the collector make sense of the world.

Collections can be a magical escape into private worlds with their own rules and values. Like art, collections can be a way to order or come to terms with the strangeness, complexities, and randomness of the world. Collecting is an activity that is both sacred and profane in its trivial obsessions, complex representations of culture, ideas, and transcendent beauty. The mundane is made remarkable and objects are made to evoke memory, singular passions, loss, and love (Elsner & Cardinal, 1994). Like making art, collections and their display involve questions of form, function, and meaning. Like artists, collectors consider questions of pleasure, beauty, and truth (King, 2008). Individual collectors get unquestioned dominion over their own kingdom of strange objects. The collector, through selecting, interpreting, storing, or displaying, becomes the creator of the collection and gives objects a new identity. The unique territory of the collection provides gratification and satisfaction through the process of organizing, touching, thinking about the objects, and deciding what is included or excluded. The collection holds the promise of future hunting and gathering. It represents an endless quest with the possibility of organizing something that is a singular creation. The possession of the collection can fend off the chaos of the infinite material world, the loss of memory, the passage of time, and the passing of objects into oblivion (Karp, 2006).

ARTISTS, COLLECTING, AND MUSEUMS

Collections can make ordinary objects seem different or special. They often ask viewers to reexamine their assumptions about beauty and utility. The vitrine, so common in museum and artistic displays, reflects the desire to magically transform the object, and is reminiscent of church displays of sacred relics. The vitrine seems to suspend time as it protects and enhances the object and reinforces its uniqueness by keeping the viewer at a distance (Putnam, 2001). In *The New* (1980-86), Jeff Koons makes the most ordinary objects look special by displaying vacuum cleaners in museum vitrines. This work emphasizes the fetish aspect of art objects or collected artifacts when they are removed from their intended use. The forms of museum displays, including the labeling and the underlying politics of revealing and concealing, offer rich contexts for artistic exploration and critical inquiry. The hidden artistry and language of museum collections provides a rich subtext to the actual display. For example, in the American Museum of Natural History Museum in New York, it is easy to find paintings by anonymous artists whose work is designed only to enhance objects on display. A beautifully painted backdrop of a Wyoming landscape is intended to embellish our appreciation of the carefully preserved antelope, suspended in time to evoke the mythical grandeur of the American frontier. The methodology behind the display of the collection and the relationships between art and science are a rich source for contemporary artists who use collections as their medium.

Artists Fred Wilson and Mark Dion blur the boundaries between curator and artist by using the language of display and material culture as the medium for their own artwork. Both artists also weave significant connections to local human and non-human communities into their work. Fred Wilson is known for his provocative exhibitions that upend what is often assumed to be the dispassionate, neutral role of the museum in collecting, displaying, and interpreting objects. Every part of the museum is subject to his reinterpretations. He disrupts traditional role of curator by rearranging and relabeling collections and critically examining their place of origin and their relationships to the communities where they are displayed. In his work, the site of the museum is very important, as well as how the collection speaks to its local audience. In his questioning of what is treasured, and why, Wilson confronts the impossibility of the museum's neutral posture by adding information normally

omitted in museums and thereby complicating how objects can be understood. His exhibits are filled with surprises designed to destabilize viewers, like putting a Ku Klux Klan mask in baby carriage. By remixing and relabeling collections, he disrupts the authority of the museum so that hidden acts of revealing and concealing become visible. His work seeks to uncover the many layers of meanings surrounding objects and how museums privilege one meaning over others. According to Wilson, "Museum people are mistaken when they believe museums collect 'things.' They collect memories, meanings, emotions, and experiences" (Graham, 2007b, p. 213). His artistry reveals the hidden or suppressed meanings of objects by exposing unexamined assumptions about power, place, displacement, privilege, and history.

Artistic collecting can be very different from scientific or hobbyist collecting. Mark Dion recasts natural history as cultural history and uses the medium of the collection to comment on our assumptions about scientific objectivity and our relationships with the non-human world. He disturbs the authority of science and archaeology to create collections that have the surreal quality of dreams (Sollins, 2008). His work often connects to specific places, in much the same way that archaeology focuses on excavating histories of culture as reflected in the objects left behind. Dion has done excavations on the Thames River, dredged a Venice canal, and sifted through the materials dug up in the renovation of Museum of Modern Art. In the process of gathering and sorting, the material culture of the past becomes exhibited alongside the material culture of the present. Dion's work is site specific in a way designed to highlight how we collect, name, and classify nature and the artifacts of culture. Archaeologists look for the meaning of the artifacts in their relationship to each other and to the earth. Everything is documented, washed, and measured. Mark Dion disrupts this approach by questioning what should be dug up, who should do the digging, and what should be displayed. He disturbs the authority of science and the museum by connecting archaeology to the ambiguous and ironic voice of contemporary art. Although he emulates archaeological and scientific approaches, his sorting proceeds in a more intuitive, childlike way. His artwork is a performance of collecting, archaeology, and science that both embraces and critiques how we collect and interpret objects (Putnam, 2001). The gathering, organizing, and interpreting of collections that characterizes the work of these two artists suggests intriguing possibilities for art education that might connect material culture to personal expression and community.

LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, AND COLLECTING

Students typically come to the university from many different places and are rarely aware of the rich ecological and human communities that surround their schools. The character of local culture and ecology is easily hidden by modern civilization within the university. Study happens in air-conditioned rooms under artificial light among abstract texts. Local plants and animals are buried under asphalt parking lots, and professors are expected to be cosmopolitan and eschew the provincial. They owe no allegiance to local geographical territory (Zencey, 1996). As a university educator, I often wondered how place-based pedagogy might counter these trends. I decided that field studies of Fremont Culture rock art within the Great Basin desert would provide an excellent catalyst for an educational experience that immersed students in local communities, material culture studies, and the art of collecting.

The Desert Rock Art project involved a group of Brigham Young University undergraduate art education students in a series of collecting expeditions that explored ancient rock art, local culture, and ecology. These research expeditions were funded by university research grants and carried out during the spring and summer semesters. Although students could receive independent study credit, most of them volunteered to participate because of the opportunity to do mentored research, art, hiking, river rafting, and camping. This project was designed to orient students toward local natural and artistic resources. It drew on the disciplines of art, art history, nature study, and archaeology, with an emphasis on

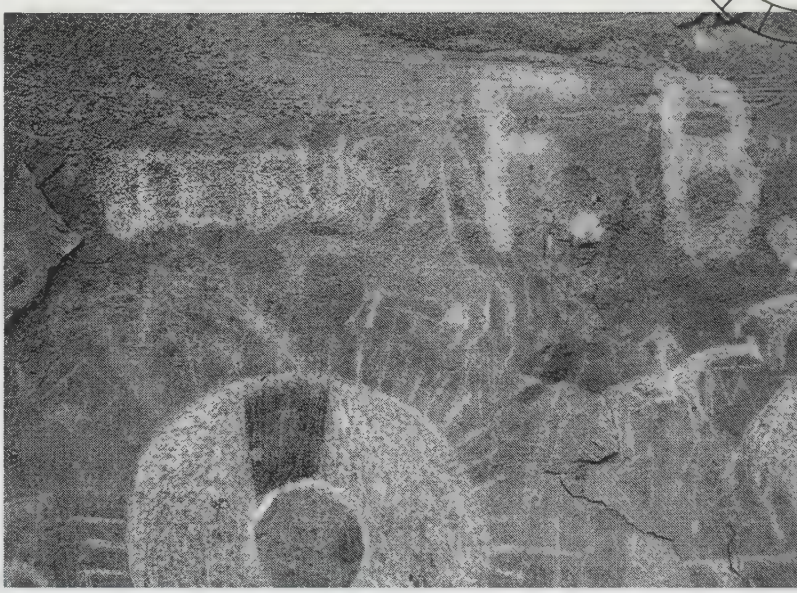

FIGURE 1 (LEFT). Fremont Culture rock art, Thompson Springs, Sego Canyon.

FIGURE 2 (RIGHT). Contemporary rock graffiti, San Rafael Swell.

collecting as a means to understand culture, community, and ecology. The range of subjects studied included ancient rock art, desert ecology, local communities, museum collections, antique stores, the politics of wilderness preservation, and contemporary artists who use collections as their medium. The initial idea was to study the ancient Fremont Indian rock art that is embedded throughout the landscapes of central and southern Utah. This artwork consists of pictographs that were painted on the rock and petroglyphs that were incised into the rock. These works were primarily created by Fremont cultures that lived in the area from 700 to 1300 AD. They were part of a widespread culture on the Colorado Plateau that created rock art known as Barrier Canyon Style (Cole, 2004). These images hint at ancient rituals, shamans, symbols, and cultures that have disappeared. They are haunting, mysterious, and beautiful (Figure 1).

Many of these ancient images have been modified or enhanced over successive generations of Fremont Culture. Some of them were overwritten with pioneer names and more recent signatures and graffiti (Figure 2). Other images have been used for target practice. Many of them are located in remote desert wilderness areas that require extensive walking to find. For example, the Great Gallery in Horseshoe Canyon required a long drive over unimproved roads and a 3-mile hike into the desert. It was impossible to view this artwork without encountering the desert landscape. Landscape is a flexible concept with many meanings. Students were familiar with the idea of landscape as subject matter for paintings, but they were less familiar with the notion of landscape as a cultural idea. It can describe a romantic, usually disappearing, rural paradise. It can symbolize community, stewardship, local knowledge, and nature. For 19th-century American artists, it was used to evoke moral sentiments about the sacred character of the natural world. Our notions of landscape reflect ways of seeing that encompass ideologies and culture (Henderson, 2003). Landscapes are never neutral views; rather, they are intimate encounters layered with histories. A landscape validates a sense of place for some people while marginalizing others. Ultimately, landscape is a human construction, a culturally mediated idea and a culturally shaped physicality that is part of material culture (Bender, 2006). The land and landscapes of the American West are both romanticized and threatened territories. This arid land has been an area of ideological and physical conflict for generations, and it is still contested terrain. Like the land itself, the artworks we studied were a battlefield for the weather, competing ideas about nature, development, preservation, grazing, and recreation.

As artists and educators, we were looking for ways to understand the ancient artwork, its culture, its relationship to indigenous people still living in the area, the small towns within the desert, and the unique ecology of the region. Consistent with notions of place-based education, we wanted to include local human and ecological communities as legitimate subjects of study. Consistent with the cultural anthropological framework of material culture studies, I wanted to broaden the students' art educational experience beyond just the visual arts, visual culture, or art history. Material culture studies directed our attention toward ordinary objects and how people connect with them, particularly in the form of collecting (Bolin & Blandy, 2003). Our study of collecting included local museums, thrift stores, tourist souvenirs, and collecting as a medium for contemporary art. We also considered broader issues of the land and landscape as a human construction and part of material culture. The ancient artwork we studied used the landscape as an important element, both as the surface and as a context for experiencing the work. Sometimes the work was located on steep walls in places that seemed to evoke quiet or reverence. Other times it was located next to dirt roads pounded by huge trucks. It often seemed fragile and vulnerable, particularly when it had been scratched over or pocked by bullet holes. The work of these Fremont Culture artists required a physical pilgrimage to be experienced. The viewing was accompanied by heat, caterpillars, and the voices of frogs and birds. It had purposes that were very different than those that might be contemplated by a contemporary artist preparing work for an art gallery.

Our study of landscape included the ecology of the desert. We walked for miles, camped, studied the names of the plants and animals, and wondered at the enormous surge of gypsy moth caterpillars that covered the trees in some areas. Approaching artwork along trails in deep river gorges created an aesthetic experience that was very different from viewing art in a gallery or museum. As we visited these ancient sites, we collected sand, rocks, and pieces of plants. We did drawings, took photographs, and talked about what the images might mean. What we saw and what we talked about led us to ask more questions, which led to further research. We visited the small desert towns and their local museum collections, including Helper's mining museum and Price's, a fossil dinosaur collection. We considered thrift stores and tourist souvenir stores as cultural sites that could be mined for meaning as well as places from which to collect other artifacts. The road to the petroglyphs at Thompson Springs led through a deserted town filled with collapsed houses, dilapidated signs, and abandoned restaurants. Our collecting here was only limited by the size of our vehicle. Within the ghost buildings of Thompson Springs we considered how abandoned material culture accumulates and decays.

Although the original rock art had to be experienced in the desert landscape, the images could also be seen in tourist shops in Green River and Moab, where a plethora of souvenirs were sold. Miriam, a Navaho student, was particularly interested in how Native Americans and ancient rock art were being depicted as exotic relics. She wondered why people need to own special objects to take home and how a souvenir functions. Her study led her examine contemporary Navaho and Hopi practices where rock art was a living art form. As part of our final exhibition, she constructed a collection of souvenirs that illustrated stereotypes about Native Americans. Many rock art sites included writing and images added by pioneers and other visitors. Jordan focused her research on these over-writers and their stories. One particular name, Albert Webber, occurred at several different sites. She eventually found his granddaughter in Green River, Utah, whom we visited and interviewed. We learned about Albert Webber's life herding cattle, and the story of his family's struggle in this small desert town. In her home we also found a large collection of beautiful violet bottles collected from old mining dumps. Other students tried to understand their relationship to an ancient indigenous culture that was foreign to them. They talked into the night about artist shamans and whether it was still possible to have a spiritual experience with the artwork. We were

amateurs to archaeology and to the study of desert ecology. But we were encouraged by our new beginnings. As Mark Dion said:

> I think the amateur really has made tremendous contributions. One of the interesting things about the amateur is that they do what they do for themselves even though something may not be new to science, like this particular bird they're studying, it's new to them. They're able to experience the enthusiasm and excitement about discovery which really drives scientific inquiry, and artistic passion as well (Art 21).

FIGURES 3 AND 4.
Final exhibition collections.

We occasionally met on campus and read books; however, most of our study took place outside and in the small communities of central Utah. Our study of ancient rock art was crisscrossed with other disciplines and raised many more questions than it answered. We renewed our awe, reverence, and appreciation of the desert. We walked for miles through terrain that was both beautiful and hostile. The artwork continued to speak to us, as did the landscape, though its intentions and audience remained shrouded in mystery. We made friends with people who lived in the local communities and came to appreciate how collecting can express important ideas. The desert rock research-art project culminated in a large installation piece consisting of the objects we had gathered as well as drawings and paintings from our travels. Maps, notes, sketches, shards of Mormon clay, sand, and rocks were included (Figures 3 and 4). The university art gallery constructed a 9-foot-square room to house the installation. Although we displayed it as if it might be a scientific exegesis about our research, the process of organizing the collection was much more intuitive and direct. We wanted objects to tell their stories, and each object was part of a family of other objects. The construction of this collection required days of arranging and pondering the meanings of objects, decisions about what to include or exclude, and how things could be organized to best tell our story. The final exhibition was a combination of the archaeological and surreal designed to evoke the haunting and perplexing experiences we had within the desert.

CONCLUSION

School education often becomes abstracted and disconnected from local human and ecological communities. The intersection of place-based pedagogies and material culture studies within the medium of collections can create rich contexts for learning, research, and artmaking that focuses on the places we inhabit. Collecting is a widespread phenomenon that offers rich commentary about culture and places. A collection requires the viewer to move through space and to consider qualities of texture, weight, or smell that go beyond the visual. It can also be a highly expressive means of artistic communication and a way of understanding communities. Collecting and collections can also connect student artmaking to material culture studies. Our study of rock art crossed many disciplines and brought students into direct contact with important issues within the human and ecological communities where they lived. The desert wilderness can be both a hostile environment and place for healing and regeneration (Cameron, 2008). After their experience in the desert, the students found the land to be more interesting and felt a stronger connection to the local community and ecology. Our field expeditions set out to examine the complex relationships between the cultural and the natural with the purposes of nurturing a deeper connection to the local land and communities. We found that collecting can be an ideal medium for artistry and inquiry based on the material culture of the local. The isolation that seems to be inherent in contemporary life can distract us from relationships to the land and the community. Our study of local ecology, ancient artists, and desert communities provided a localized opportunity for us to understand some of these relationships. Material culture studies and place-based learning, as embodied in collecting, can be a rich resource for learning that goes beyond the de-contextualized school learning.

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Material Culture in Art Education: Some Suggested Principles, with Examples

■ ANNE BURKHART

The steady emergence of material culture studies in art education points to the need for more discussion regarding what material culture can mean for the field and how to study it. Material culture, all of the human-made forms and environments that we live in and with (Blandy & Bolin, 2003), is important and worthy of study particularly if culture itself "... is an emergent property of the relationship between persons and things" (Graves-Brown, 2000a, p. 4).

This chapter examines ideas from some fields that study material culture, for the purpose of constructing a set of 18 suggested principles that the field of art education can consider when studying material forms. These fields include but are not limited to anthropology, archaeology, folk studies, cultural studies, art history, design, art education, psychology, sociology, and history. Material culture studies frequently crosses disciplinary borders and also integrates them. Some material culture theorists consider the hybrid nature of material culture studies to be an important strength and "source of energy" (Martin & Garrison, 1997, p. 1). Buchli (2002) describes it not as a discipline, but "an intervention within and between disciplines; translations from one realm into another" (p. 13). This amalgam of principles reflects the interdisciplinary character of many approaches to the study of material culture.

Buchli (2002) provides a helpful preface to this chapter—a reminder that the study of material culture has always been conducted in the service other endeavors (including imperialism as well as critical awareness) and that this "super-category" of objects "materializes something entirely new and uniquely Victorian and Western"—a category that was meaningless to people such as Cook Islanders "who were hardy producing 'material culture' for the consumption of sailors and travelers..." (p. 5). So, my *raison d'être* is to demonstrate the value of material culture studies and to encourage the development of critical consciousness regarding the material forms that people live within and with, especially for art education.

The approach of this chapter is twofold. The first is to present some ideas relevant for investigating material forms—aspects to consider in order to better understand and to make meaning from them. The second is to illustrate most of the principles with examples to demonstrate and clarify them. Some examples are drawn from other studies and some from my own life—especially bicycles—to further illustrate the principle regarding the benefits of using personal knowledge and experiences, and to loosely follow an object under study.

I use a variety of terms: *material forms, objects*, and *things* to diffuse any unitary idea about what can be studied. The principles in this chapter inherently overlap and are importantly connected to other principles, and I advocate a holistic approach in which principles are woven together when exploring material forms. The set of suggested principles is not definitive or complete, as it is a nascent gathering of thoughts for studying material forms, which in fact could never be complete.

SUGGESTED PRINCIPLES

Importance

Material forms are important because they shape who we are and what we do. Fundamental to material culture studies in general is that, because objects "radically" shape human activities in significant ways (Graves-Brown, 2000a), many have issued the call to explore them. All material culture studies assume that the ideas and material forms they investigate are important to examine for varying reasons, and often focus on exploring specific objects in ways that the reader probably has not.

Both Miller (2001) and Csikszentmihalyi (1993) focus on home environments—the former author because it is an important social location where most consumption occurs, and the latter in a search of a home's "symbolic ecology" that helps give people a sense of permanence (p. 25). Reasons that I study the bicycle include its cultural importance, including, for instance, that it made transportation economically available to many people in the late 1890s (Hurd & Pridmore, 1995), its mostly unsung status (at least in the US) as much of the world's transportation workhorse, and my 17-year history with bicycles.

One way to chart the importance of the material is to examine occurrences that attempt to deny it. Some colonial people understood that, while proper attire represented civility, it "should simultaneously be understood as unimportant as mere surface decoration" resulting in a "balancing act that invites perpetual anxiety" (Keane, 2005, p. 191). Many religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, promote the ultimate reality as the immaterial spiritual one beyond the physical world; however, it is in relation to, and often through very specific material forms, such as bright colors on a Hindu bride's dress, that the immaterial is embodied (Miller, 2005).

Contingencies of Meaning

Meanings of material forms are always contingent, not inherent in an object (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981), and meanings are always in flux (Hunt, 2003; Preston, 2000). Tilley (1989) posits that an object "has no ultimate or unitary meaning that can be held to exhaust it" but "has multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings" (quoted in Martin, 1999, p. 11). Meadow (2005) calls objects "copious" in reference to their multiple interpretive possibilities. Meskell (2005) describes similar possibilities as "multivalency," explaining that the Great Pyramid at Giza can convey "gross materialism and despotism to the notion of pure spirituality and eternal essence" (p. 7).

An infinite number of variables comprise the array of potential contingencies. Regarding a contingency of definition, Hurd and Pridmore (1995) and Herlihy (2004) differ on what constitutes a bicycle and when the first one was produced. Similarly, regarding a contingency of location, the bicycle as a means of transportation has not manifested itself in the same way in the US as it has in Britain, Europe, Asia, and elsewhere; here they are more often used as recreation (Herlihy, 2004).

Contexts

Material forms are embedded in telling contexts. These contexts include complex intersections of the social, cultural, and historical (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Exploring these instances and intersections are critically important and can be enlightening. Archaeologist Ian Hodder's exhortation to explore everything relevant to an object has been called "maddeningly holistic," while still the ideal to strive for (Martin & Garrison, 1997, p. 14). Miller (2005) reminds us that ideas about material culture will always be perceived in the contexts of culture. As with contingencies, the number of contextual factors is myriad. We might consider that objects have biographies—contexts that can be explored—including design and manufacture, cultural frameworks, histories of use and disuse, provenance, instances of survival, displacement, storage, disposal, refurbishment, etc. For example, in the late 1800s, because of the increased mobility they facilitated and the strong influence they had on promoting functional women's clothing including bloomers, bicycles had liberating aspects for some women (Herlihy, 2004; Hurd & Pridmore, 1995), particularly white women (Herlihy).

Power

Material forms embody and demonstrate power. Following Foucault (2001), power can be expressed through material form on various registers including the personal and the institutional. Material culture is a way to understand that power is not abstract but "as the mode by which certain forms or people become realized, often at the expense of others" (Miller, 2005, p. 19). Graves-Brown asserts that materiality is a "nexus through which power relations operate" (2000a, pp. 5-6). Thompson asserts that it is people in power that have the control "to make things durable and to make things transient..." (cited in Buchli, 2002, p. 15).

For example, institutions such as museums play important roles in helping to determine whose history is told and what objects are collected and exhibited, thus exerting considerable control regarding what counts as culture and history, as explicated through critiques including the wry, savvy ones issued by the Guerrilla Girls. The bicycle and its pivotal role in popularizing clothing that allowed much more physical movement—the bloomer—and greater mobility contributed to women's independence.

Boundaries

Boundaries regarding what constitutes the "material" have important implications. These borders help determine what we pay attention to and how, including what we consider appropriate for investigation. Objects explored under the large umbrella of material culture studies include a vast array of things, for example, Coca-Cola (Miller, 1998), Amish quilts (Holstein, 2000), and implications of gender in relation to a particular lamp (Ye, 2000). Studies of the material also include things such as radio-produced sound (Tacchi, 1998), the material basis for memory (Hallam & Hockey, 2001), and, based on the implications of "sensing" fabrics and other "intelligent" objects, cognition itself (Küchler, 2005). Studies such as these elicit questions about the nature of materiality and subject/object relationships, such as where the human subject ends and the material world begins. Questions arise regarding the boundaries between human bodies and material forms when we consider Botox® injections, silicone implants, body modification art, increasingly sophisticated prostheses, and after Foucault, the disciplined body itself—buffed, toned, tread-milled, and tummy-tucked.

Affordance / Agency

Objects conduct and condition human agency, and human agency depends on them. Material forms embody, suggest, empower, indicate, guide, constrain, communicate, convey, and implicate. Miller (2005) posits that we are not only our bodies and minds, but "much of what we are exists not through our consciousness or body, but as an exterior environment that habituates and prompts us" (p. 5). Culture emerges from the interaction "between persons and things" (Graves-Brown, 2000a, p. 4), and objects grow from the "mutual involvement of people and materials in an environment" (Ingold, 2000, p. 68). Produced in a complex, active feedback loop between people and the physical world, material forms of all kinds allow us to exist, move, circulate, and dwell as we continually develop and alter those forms through interaction.

We might consider a thing's "affordance"—what one perceives an object is capable of or will allow regarding human agency (Gibson, 1979, quoted in Graves-Brown, 2000a, p. 4). Keane (2005) asks what an object makes possible and invites us to do as "embodied actors" (p. 194). Thus, a bicycle might afford riding to the grocery store on the other side of town, but perhaps not if the rider is in a hurry or the weather tumultuous, and thus affordance is also conditioned by contextual factors.

Gell (1998) suggests that artworks have a kind of agency because they are the artist's "distributed mind" that influences people (quoted in Miller, 2005, p. 13). Morphy posits that art is a "mode of action" and that its capacity to mediate is a fundamental characteristic of art

(2009, p. 8). Dant (1999) considers things that "carry messages that were *intended* as messages," such as art, CD players, and books to be mediating objects (p. 154).

Cultural Impact

Some objects have significantly influenced human life. The impact that certain things have had on culture is undeniable and worthy of attention. Cars (Graves-Brown, 2000b) and electric guitars (Preston, 2000), for example, have both had an enormous impact on Western culture. Because some things have helped produce important societal shifts, such as the two mentioned above, they are often also particularly rich object exemplars to study.

The bicycling "paved" the way for the automobile (Herlihy, 2004, p. 5). The bicycling trade necessitated better and better roads, and a national movement that it sponsored helped lead to a national road system in the US. Additionally, bicycle repair shops became some of the first gasoline stations.

Language

Material forms are understood in part through language. In earlier material culture studies, objects were considered to be a kind of language—as a semiotic text that could be "read" (Martin & Garrison, 1997). Tilley (2002) states that "a house is not a text" and that language can obfuscate as much as it clarifies, yet is what academics primarily have available to them (p. 25). Critiques of object-as-text (see, for instance, Miller, 2005; Buchli, 2002) cite the shortcomings of purely abstract ideas and the disappearing (non-corporeal) object.

Investigating the language that surrounds a material form can be fruitful. For example, despite their name, millions of bicycles categorized as "mountain bikes" are ridden only on pavement and never off road on the terrain they were originally designed and marketed for (Hurd & Pridmore, 1995).

Physical Characteristics

An object's physical, material properties and affective aspects are important attributes (see Attfield, 1996; Prown, 2001). Some material culture studies advocate thoroughly exploring specific characteristics of objects, and acknowledging the experiential. This approach encourages attention to the sensual and material qualities allowing for more nuanced and less reductive explanations of the ideas that they exemplify (Miller, 1998).

Rather than immediately reducing an object such as a Barbie doll to a linguistic judgment as "sexist," this approach advocates examining how physical characteristics reinforce sexist ideas. This approach is exemplified by Attfield's (1996) study in which she compares Barbie's stiff movement capabilities and limited number of joints to those of an action man figure with considerable flexibility, concluding that Barbie is to be looked at, whereas the male figure is made for conducting action. Another example is the "Sociable" tandem bicycle in which riders sat side-by-side that was popular in the 1890s (Hurd & Pridmore, 1995) and which made riding conducive to conversation, in contrast with the tandem that places one rider directly in front of the other.

Material Instability

Material forms are dynamic, not stable, and are always in flux. In order for an object to be studied, for instance, it must have survived, and it has to be available for study. Both of these aspects are conditioned by what archaeologists term "formation processes," comprised of human agency such as saving, storing, reusing, collecting, and of environmental forces such as weather, mold, and bacteria (Schiffer, 1996). Collecting practices, including the activities of individual collectors and institutional entities such as archives and museums, play important roles in what kinds of objects survive—and consequently over many of the kinds of things that are available for study.

Bicycles and bicycle parts are frequently offered on for sale in marketplaces such as eBay. Listing condition issues is standard on these sites, and, prone to rust and dents, most bear the ravages of rider usage and/or damaging storage conditions. Most bicycle collectors are male and tend to prefer men's bicycles. Many women's bicycles are pirated for parts and subsequently no longer exist as whole bicycles, thus demonstrating how collecting, selection, and refurbishment practices can perpetuate the continuity of one material form and hasten the demise of others.

Identities

Material forms are grounded in identity-based factors. We might consider identity factors in two basic directions—those of the person exploring an object to interpret it, and those regarding the "biography" of the object.

A person's identity-based factors are important to recognize and consider when interpreting art (Burkhart, 1997). It is important to consider that identity is not necessarily stable and that living through materiality often reflects and embodies both conscious and unconscious forces and facets of identity. Hooper-Greenhill (1994, p. 49) posits that attitudes, beliefs, political views, and ideas and values from the "interpretive communities" that people belong to influence interpretations of art. I suggest extending these ideas when interpreting material culture. For example, when recently perusing new bicycles, I was dismayed at the colors one manufacturer offered the youngest riders—in children's 16″ bicycles. The light blue and pink for girls and fire engine red for boys were strictly stereotypical. As a woman who advocates freedom from standard gender stereotypes, I think that it is important to dispel stereotypes such as those perpetuated by these colors, especially for very young children.

Identity factors can influence an object from design to disposal. Bicycles designed for and marketed to women incorporated a drop frame early in their history in the 1800s mostly to accommodate the long skirts that were the standard fashion for women at the time. Many "women's" bicycles never lost the drop frame, despite its inherently weak structure as compared to the greater strength of most men's triangular frames. The weaker frame can translate into lost energy due to slight frame flex while pedaling. Part of the logic of the frame centers on allowing female riders to modestly mount and dismount.

Senses and the Body

The body and the senses are an important mode of perceiving and understanding materiality (see, for example, Dant, 1999; Edwards et al., 2006; Pointon, 2005) including habits of movement (Warnier, 2001). A key feature in some current writing about material culture is the emphasis on sensory perceptions and their culturally inflected roots (see especially Edwards et al., 2006). It is not only that the senses are critically important, but also the senses in relation to one another, the very definition of senses including the limits of the "big five," and the hierarchy of certain senses, especially vision, in Western culture. Racist attitudes attributed higher value to sight, associating other senses with "inferior" peoples (Classen & Howes, 2006).

Prown (2001) suggests that people use their senses to investigate aspects of objects such as weight and texture, and, if the object is physically unavailable, to do so "imaginatively and empathetically" (p. 81). Incorporating various sensory modes of perception allows for inclusivity regarding persons without particular sensory registers, such as people with little or no vision. People from different cultural groups experience and value senses differently (Edwards et al., 2006). Classen and Howes (2006) explain that

> The anthropology of the senses is particularly germane to material culture studies, since every artifact embodies a particular sensory mix. It does so in terms of its production (given the particular sensory skills and value that go into its making), its circulation (given the way its properties appeal

to the senses and so constitute it as an object of desire or aversion), and its consumption (which is conditioned by the meanings and uses people perceive in it according to the sensory order of their culture or subculture). (p. 200)

Modern museum contexts, important institutional locations that feature the exhibition of material forms, are typically "empires of sight" (Stewart, 1999, quoted in Classen and Howes, 2006, p. 200), where "objects are colonized by the gaze" (Classen and Howes, 2006, p. 200) and "sanitized" (Buchli, 2002), although early museums and collections were not originally devoid of sensual engagement (Pointon, 2005). Focusing on the Holocaust Museum, Feldman (2006) asks about the information, empathy, and engagement lost by not effectively incorporating and acknowledging the senses in museum exhibitions.

Bicycle suspension systems affect riders' sensory registers, including not only comfort, but also their willingness and ability to ride. Early bicycles had various kinds of suspension (very important for solid-iron-wheeled "boneshakers") such as seats suspended on strips of fabric or very heavy springs (Herlihy, 2004). Many contemporary bicycles sport suspension systems based on those from the late 1800s and early 1900s—such as spring forks and suspension seat posts, allowing, for example, tolerable riding over very rugged terrain.

Personal / Prior Knowledge and Experience

Prior knowledge and experiences can inform how things are understood (Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). Additionally, exploring and articulating our own personal narratives and experiences about objects and encouraging students to do the same helps promote understandings about how the objects around us help shape our lives (Ulbricht, 2007; see also Kader, 2003). Thus, students could study objects in their immediate environment or an object that had a significant impact on their lives.

bell hooks reminisces about quilts her grandmother made—"history worked by hand" (hooks, 2007, p. 326)—to connect with important ideas about her life and identity. She contemplates layers of meaning in the quilt her grandmother made for her—ink spots reminding her of her long career as a writer—and made of scraps sewn by hand. The quilt becomes for her a nexus of symbolism, a reminder of who she is and where she came from, including the erasure of Black women artists which her writing seeks to counter.

A snapshot of my bicycle history would be: my constantly ridden red childhood bike, early adulthood and fun urban mountain bike rides often as a means of transportation, a happenstance garage sale and my first old coaster-brake bike, a few bicycle swap meets and the slow construction of a micro fleet of four old bikes, ending with my current occasional gatherings of friends for leisurely rides on the old bikes to the park. My involvement with various bicycles initiated and infused my academic interest in them and inspired several writings (including this one). What the bicycle became for me was in short a symbol of freedom and independence, particularly as a woman. Rather than the sense of seclusion and protection that a car can provide, the bicycle affords a "being-in-the-world-ness," placing one's physical and social presence in the landscape. This factor was coupled by the fact that, although I had no previous aptitude or interest in machinery, I was happy that I could learn to overhaul coaster-brake bicycles.

Symbolism

Materials forms can symbolize ideas, and this function is always conditioned by culture. Symbolism is not stable, and occurs in different instances, including personal, group, corporate, regional, national, occupational, and others. For example, in contrast to a Javanese sarong, the longer gait that a pair of slacks permits in which legs can move independently invites but doesn't determine "athleticism... giving them the potential" to become a conventionalized symbol for "freedom" (Keane, 2005, p. 195).

Individuals and groups can value particular objects that reflect, represent, or symbolize ideas important to them (Preston, 2000). Because bicycles permit, and typically require (unless it is a tandem) independent travel, and the rider is responsible for the forward motion of travel, they symbolize freedom for many who ride them. Messenger bicycles are typically minimal, stripped-down, scuffed, homemade single-speed bikes that often sport customized components (e.g., sawn off handlebars and a sticker or two), highlighting a Do-It-Yourself (DIY), urban, renegade message. Bicycle companies have taken note of the genre. The Specialized bicycle company created a line named after iconic urban locations—"Boston," "New York," and the "Seattle"—a green bike sporting a Starbucks coffee holder and flat faux wood-grain fenders. Thus, although many will still be homemade, this instance of a DIY aesthetic has become increasingly commodified; its symbolism is clearly in a state of flux and is dependent on a number of variables.

Using

How material forms are used has important implications. Cultural change occurs through how objects are used (Martin, 1993; Myers, 2001; Preston, 2000). Change often occurs through the accumulation of changes in usage resulting from shifts in societal needs and desires, including—after Foucault—cultural resistance (Preston, 2000). This can be a "hopeful" scenario, suggesting that people are not just "passive consumers" and that creativity and meaning are associated with the user in addition to the maker (Martin, 1993, p. 157).

Significant innovations in bicycle technology came about through diverse activities such as technical experimentation (e.g., creating the pneumatic tire) and social activity (e.g., friends altering old bikes and riding down hills, thus creating the first mountain bikes) (Herlihy, 2004). Forchhammer (2006) regards "transformed usage" as particularly important for groups such as persons with disabilities, including the feedback they can provide (p. 144). He discusses how some object-aids designed to assist people with disabilities are often not used as planned—with telling results. Thus, design input from persons with disabilities can improve both practical and psychological aspects of objects designed to aid them.

Myers (2001) suggests that the current material culture studies has promise because of its concern with how people actually use things. Buchli (2002) states that the "constant material flux" and the ephemerality of contemporary culture coupled with "increasing immaterial interventions" of digital worlds point to the need to explore the concept of transience—of things falling in and out of use quickly.

Preston (2000) theorizes the interplay between utilitarian and symbolic functions. Using her model, heavy single-speed coaster-brake bikes of the 1930s, '40s and '50s became discarded in many garages in the 1960s when lighter multiple-speed bicycles came into broad circulation, losing their function as commonly used bikes, although technically they could still be ridden. They also lost their earlier symbolic function as "cool" when motorcycles no longer became a major symbolic referent for bicycle structure, design, and marketing.

Design / Production / Circulation / Marketing / Exchange

How an object is produced, circulated, and distributed can be meaningful (Martin, 1993). Consumption, a condition of later modernity, is the system in which goods and services are offered for sale and then sold (Dant, 1999; Martin, 1993), and has figured importantly in material culture studies.

Bicycle consumption has been influenced in particular ways by myriad factors such as technology, marketing, economic forces, consumer desire, gender, and popular culture. Hurd and Pridmore (1995) provide an overview. Examples of technological factors include the introduction of the pneumatic tire, and of aluminum's appearance in frames in the 1930s, both of which made bicycles lighter and faster. Popular culture was directly incorporated in models such as one sporting a Donald Duck likeness and another with Gene Autry's

accoutrements including pistols, metal studs, and fringe. Especially after the sagging bicycle sales following the late 1800s and very early 1900s bicycle boom, market strategies changed. Modeled after motorcycles, fat-balloon tire bikes appeared in the 1930s, with tanks, horns, luggage carriers, and headlights.

Categorizing

Categorizing material forms has important implications. One might consider whether or not to categorize, options in categorization, and both the limits and usefulness of categorization. I have argued elsewhere (Burkhart, 2006) that delaying categorization or using categorization in unexpected ways can be beneficial, referencing Miller's (1998) "unshackled" approach that discourages compartmentalizing objects. Additionally, categorization can have important implications regarding integrated (large, important cultural ideas; see Krug & Cohen-Evron, 2000) and interdisciplinary (conventional categories, i.e., similar to "subjects") approaches to teaching (Burkhart, 2006). Placing objects only in expected categories may stunt broader, more informative ways to think about things.

Walters (1996) explains that the Navajo do not have a word for art; thus, Western object hierarchies regarding expressive objects can be biased and exclusionary, and misleading regarding attempts to better understanding Navajo expressive forms.

Categorization, whether conventional or not, can sometimes be useful. Considering art as one among others in a category of "mediating objects" (Morphy, 2009; Dant, 1999) can be productive. Csikszentmihalyi (1993) discusses the power implied by "kinetic" things such as "cars, boats, tools" (p. 24), to which we might add bicycles. And we would have many reasons for considering them among other forms of transportation as well.

Ethical Dimensions and Imagining the Future

Ethical concerns circulate around material forms. Production methods, sustainability, green engineering, and reuse frequently elicit discussions with ethical dimensions. Design, for instance, is sometimes infused with ethical concerns. Papanek (1996) asks a series of questions about the future design of objects, including, "will the design significantly aid the sustainability of the environment?... can it ease pain?" (p. 45).

Exploring how objects might positively or adversely affect the common good can be informative. Katz (2001) describes a bicycle prototype and low-cost production technique that Ross Evans created and took to developing countries so that local populations could make their own sturdy bicycles designed to carry heavy, backbreaking loads of goods.

Rethinking an object can provide cues for understanding and for regarding future object forms (see Burkhart, 2006; Cranz, 2000). Forchhammer (2006) discusses the importance of design input from those objects are designed for. Regarding chairs, Cranz (2000) discusses the way in which some cultural habits and chair geometry do not optimize ergonomic aspects regarding the body and posture. Encouraging students to think about technology, safety, and human factors, and how they might apply to designing a safer, faster bicycle (Burkhart, 2006), was enlightening. We also might consider and explore how bicycles can factor into the manner in which we traverse geographical space, which is currently under close scrutiny in our current age of high gas prices coupled with environmental and health concerns.

CONCLUSION

This chapter suggests ideas that the field of art education might consider when exploring material forms, and argues for using theories drawn from material culture studies to do so. It is also meant to demonstrate the importance, vitality, and relevance of studying material culture for art education. Material forms help shape and determine who people are and what they do; they are the matrix in which people live, and are therefore worthy of attention. Art education is already strongly connected to design, and to museums and the varied objects

that they house. In addition to investigating the objects that museums keep, it also behooves us to explore what is not included in them and why, as well as the myriad material things that factor importantly in how we live every day.

Georges Perec suggests that

> What we need to question is bricks, concrete, glass, our table manners, our utensils, our tools, the way we spend our time, our rhythms. To question that which seems to have ceased forever to astonish us. We live, true, we breathe, true; we walk, we open doors, we go down staircases, we sit at a table in order to eat, we lie down on a bed in order to sleep. How? Where? When? Why? (Perec, 1973, quoted in Blauvelt, 2003, p. 21)

What is at stake is whose lives and cultures are acknowledged, understood, improved, accommodated, made visible, and valued, and whose are not. Certainly art education should be among the disciplines contributing to this important dialogue.

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Practical Application of Material Culture Studies Within Art Education

Art educators utilize objects in myriad ways within a vast range of instructional locations. Many of the objects (and images of objects) employed in these pedagogical engagements are situated in museums or other spaces specifically designed to house and exhibit culturally prized possessions. However, highly regarded objects are not the only type of human-mediated forms recognized and studied by researchers today. During the past few years many fields of study, including art education, have shown a growing interest in exploring how objects of everyday life and surrounding world can be utilized in meaningful ways to investigate the makers, users, and preservers of these more common items of daily life. In undertaking these investigative analyses, however, only a limited number of art educators have acknowledged the field of material culture studies as the underpinning of their analytical and pedagogical activity, and recognized specific methodological approaches within this field as foundational for the educational methods of study utilized. Responding to this instructional oversight, this volume, particularly the content of Section II, is designed as a bringing together of object, idea, and practice, with various approaches to do so drawn from the field of material culture studies.

Each of the nine chapters in this section tells a story or recommends a course of action. The section begins with a chapter by Elizabeth Garber, as she describes a first-hand pedagogical investigation in which her class searched out origins of various manufactured products, learning in the process how advertising influences what these products come to mean. Next, Jill Smith draws upon her personal knowledge and understanding of talking sticks of the indigenous Maori people of New Zealand as a way to exemplify a single-artifact approach to the study of material culture. Employing a middle school art teacher's unit on Mimbres ceramics as a starting point, James Bequette and Judi Warrick Petkau argue in their writing that these ancient artifacts represent material culture that, because of time and cultural distance between the makers and ourselves, can never be known completely and experienced fully. Following this and focusing on examples taken from her teacher preparation courses, Julia Marshall describes five art projects and one curriculum development strategy that examine the role objects and the field of material culture studies can play in art education to shape artmaking and teach critical, symbolic, and creative thinking skills. Using a framework of inquiry

inspired by semiotics, Marxism, artistic expression, and identity politics in her chapter, Kathleen Keys presents several approaches within material culture and art education for developing inquiry into the significance of sticker art. Practices of collecting by a seventh-grade art class are examined in the writing of Jeanne Nemeth, in which she examines, among many things, the interplay that occurs between children's personal space and their collected objects. Following this, an example of the expansive terrain of "artifacts" appropriate for study within art education is considered by Michelle Kraft. In so doing, the writer describes her art education students' investigation into a traditional neighborhood development in their local community, seeking to understand this complex constructed environment in terms of its design, architectural style, philosophy, and mission. Continuing on in this vein of stretching considerations within the field of art education, Christina Bain explains her use of one specific form of material culture, yard art, to help graduate students gain a new and critical understanding of qualitative research methodologies. This section and book close with the writing of Sheng Kuan Chung, who discusses social issues related to playdolls used by American children, in exploring the ideologies, attitudes, and assumptions manifested through these play objects. He concludes the chapter by addressing implications for art education in using playdolls as pedagogical sites both to enable personal agency and to develop critical knowledge and cultural sensitivity.

Together, these nine chapters in Section II provide descriptions and insights regarding various ways material culture has been used pedagogically within the context of art education. These accounts exemplify a range of possibilities educators may explore and utilize in bringing the fields of art education and material culture studies together in ways that are engaging and meaningful in the lives of learners.

Commodity Fetishism: Material Origins of Objects We Love ■ ELIZABETH GARBER

The objects we depend on, adore, and collect might be found on our shelves, in our closets, on our bodies, in our cars. They might be our transportation, our scent, our means of communicating with others, our "toys." They might come from our friends, family, travels, local stores, Internet sites, "good finds," or memorable experiences. By engaging ourselves and our students in thinking about the origins of these loved objects, we consider who made them, why they were made, their marketing, and perhaps why they interest us personally, socially, and culturally. Giorgio Armani might make us smell "suave" and "sexy," but what is perfume and where does it come from? Why do we find the smell attractive and believe it may enhance our attractiveness in certain ways?

In this chapter, I describe a teaching project in which our class uncovered the manufacturing origins of products and how advertising influences what those products come to mean. "Commodity fetishism," the title's project, is taken from media analysis and refers to the process by which products for sale are configured to have certain associations, while ignoring their means of production. Mass-produced products are generally **purposely** disassociated from their production context and filled with new meanings that actually mystify the product and turn it into a fetish object (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). For example, a Banana Republic shirt connotes 'rugged individualism,' a 'refined' and 'upscale' sensibility, and (in its original configuration) an intrepid traveler. But who designed that shirt? Where was it made? Who made it? What do the people who made the shirt wear and eat? What are their living conditions? Their working conditions? How does the shirt get to the store where we find it? Who are the people and organizations that are involved as the shirt travels to stores? Who sells and buys the object? And finally, why do we want to look like a rugged individual, a worldly traveler, or refined and 'classy'? These questions are consistent with what Bolin and Blandy (2003) emphasize is "the purpose for investigating material culture," which "is to learn about the people who make, use, respond to and preserve" the multitude of objects that make up our lives (p. 252). Material culture understands an object as a kind of text to be studied (Martin & Garrison, 1997). Commodity fetishism purposely empties products of the production meanings and replaces them with new meanings that mystify the product and, through advertising, turns it into an object we desire. Not all objects follow just this route, but, except for rocks and other natural objects, they are produced and carry connotations that for the most part are not fully intrinsic to that object or its function. Commodity fetishism is one way to research the material origins of a product that we particularly desire, and to see how it is positioned to engage our desires.

The project grew from a presentation Paul Bolin made to a colloquium of graduate students and faculty at Penn State a number of years ago. He brought in a child's rocking chair that had been in his family for a long time. Having young children at the time, he became interested in the history of the chair—from its construction to its many homes, and what it had meant in each home: a little like the movie *The Red Violin* (Girard, 1998) and E. Annie Proulx's novel *Accordion Crimes* (1996). Although this project takes a slightly different focus, these inspirations might arouse the initial interest and imagination of students participating in the commodity fetishism project.

THE PROJECT

The first time I taught the project, I came to class with a big box of stuff I owned and found intriguing: a Japanese puzzle box, a hand-made top, a rebozo (Mexican shawl), folk paintings on wood, small metal soldiers, an issue of *Los Agachados*—a Mexican comic book by

the cartoonist Ruis, etc. Later (because it seemed too authoritative and limiting if I chose all the objects, and not consistent with material culture studies, which embraces objects within the everyday worlds of people, which I take to be my students and not just me) the project began with drawings of objects that class members chose as special objects. Students' choices came from a broad base of material culture and had to be human-made or -modified (Bolin & Blandy, 2003). Drawing the objects—done also by Kader (2003) with middle school students investigating a book bag—encouraged a close, slow scrutiny of the object, both physically and in thought. Scale, materials, colors, surfaces, evidences of use were all carefully noted. We did this in class, as a group. Toward the end of class, we displayed the drawings and discussed what we knew about them. Through the display, partners chose each other: people who had drawn similar objects paired together. As homework, students recorded their relationships and connotations with the object. What did each person know about and associate with the object? How did they use it themselves? How did it come into their possession?

After partners shared their responses with each other, they considered together what they still wanted to know about the object. How was the object produced—from the materials used to assembly? How did it arrive in the place where they got it? Why did they choose it? They found ads for the object and considered how, where, and to whom was the object presented in advertising. Where were those ads located? Who buys this type of object, demographically? Then, they considered what forms of research could help them gain this knowledge. Research took place both in and out of class, as is characteristic of material culture studies, and called on multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary fields of knowledge (Bolin & Blandy, 2003; Schlereth, 1985). Using class time meant that students shared with each other, and that I, as the teacher, was available to them and able to mentor their research.

Prior learning in our class had involved learning about strategies used by advertisers to attract attention and dollars to certain products. An understanding of denotative and connotative meanings of signs, for example, came from reading Terry Barrett's work on interpretation: "A photographed still-life arrangement may denote (show) flowers in a vase on a wooden table; it may connote (suggest, imply) peace, tranquility, and the delightfulness of the simple" (Barrett, 2003, p. 192). The example Barrett explores is a *Rolling Stone* magazine cover of the rock group Destiny's Child. Barthes (1977), who inspired Barrett's differentiation, used French ads for Panzani Italian food products; we also reviewed denotations, connotations, and the linguistic message of 'Panzani,' and their means of communicating 'Italianicity' to non-Italian audiences.

Another useful concept we studied was the development of desire. "Advertising," notes Stephen Duncombe, "speaks to desire, not reason" (2007, p. 79). By playing on desire, advertisers encourage consumers to buy a product, often one they do not need: "All advertisements speak the language of transformation. They tell consumers that their products will change their lives" (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 212), and play on Lacan's concept of desire and lack as central motivating forces in our lives. Advertisers suggest that we will fulfill our desires and fill our sense of lack through consuming the proffered product: "a fantasy world is only a product purchase away" (Duncombe, 2007, p. 79).

How advertisers reach us is not as simple, though, as dangling something before our senses. We are deluged by ads and the products they sell. Why do some products speak to our desires and others not? We also considered the ideas of French theorist Louis Althusser, who argued that we are attracted to objects and products by values and beliefs that exist within our society and that unconsciously shape our desires. Our beliefs and values are influenced by the values underlying the ad, thus shaping us, a process called interpellation. Yet we also negotiate our position through our own agency (Althusser, 2001; Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). Thus, there is a "push-pull" between subjects or individuals and cultural forces, including advertisements:

> If we give too much weight to the idea of a dominant ideology, we risk portraying viewers as cultural dupes who can be "force fed" ideas and values. At the same time, if we overemphasize the potential array of interpretations viewers can make of any given image, we can make it seem as if all viewers have the power to interpret images any way they want, and that these interpretations will be meaningful in their social world… Meanings of images are created in a complex relationship among producer, viewer, image or text, and social context. (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 56)

Related to interpellation and agency is Foucault's concept of power/knowledge (Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Sturken & Cartwright, 2001), which we had also studied. Power heavily influences what counts as valuable knowledge in a social context, and thus what we count as truth. Foucault thus argues that power and knowledge are inextricably connected. Traditional power/knowledge relationships suggest that any person or institution in a position of power is perceived to have more valuable, truthful knowledge than others. Power/knowledge affects cultural norms.

To offer a short example of these concepts in practice, a Barbie doll made in Malaysia bears no markers of where it has been when it reaches a child's hands other than the tiny text "Made in Malaysia" on the box, which is soon discarded. The doll denotes a miniature plastic teenager, notably long-legged, narrow-hipped, and thick-haired. The doll, however, suggests to the child who plays with it occupations, a way to look, and, with the doll's boyfriend and all the accompanying stuff to be bought as accoutrements, a heterosexual, upper middle-class, North American way of being. It connotes ideas and standards of beauty, success, and acceptance, and interpellates its user (the girl child) into a lifestyle of consumption and desiring "upward mobility," where corporations hold the power and suggest what is worthwhile knowledge.

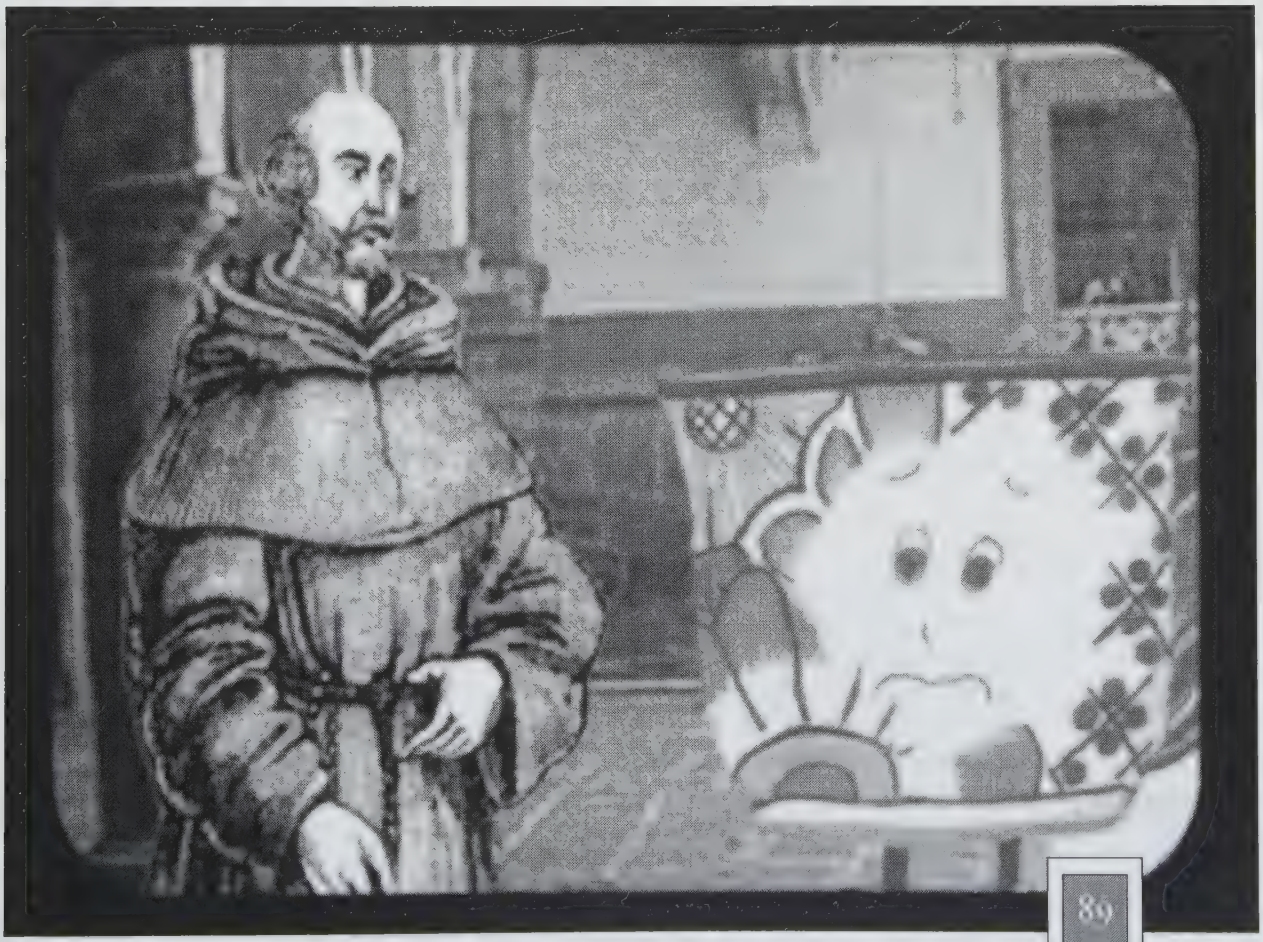

FIGURE 1. Porter McDonald and Megan Speirs Mack, "Muggy in Talavera Tourist."

The findings of students' research and analysis were presented as short dialogues with or about the objects, offered in entertaining narratives that would engage their audience of other class members. Interactive, performative strategies were encouraged. The format of the interview was open: it could be performed in front of the class, be digitized and shown to the class, include a series of images (as in a photographic narrative or a collage narrative), or take other forms the students devised.

What did students research and create? One pair of students researched a Mexican Talavera mug from its Spanish roots in Talavera de la Reina to its migration to Puebla, Mexico, to its current mass production in factories today. They investigated marketing strategies for Talavera pottery, which include issues about taste, class, tourism, and regulation. They presented their findings in a play on a slide show, "Muggy in Talavera Tourist."[1]

Another pair researched a popular men's perfume. Giorgio Armani's "Eau pour homme" was the focus of an interview between a white-shirted, neck-tied talk show host and an elusive hand puppet with the deep, gravelly voice of Oscar the Grouch with an added "sexy" touch. Through the interview we learned about the origins of perfume, differences between perfume and cologne, the basis of scents, the Armani company, and different niche markets for scents, including the marketing of masculinity and class.[2] Another group researched M·A·C Cosmetics, a subsidiary of Canada's Estée Lauder. A blonde Barbie doll in a strapless dress, sunglasses atop her head, interviews Malibu Pink, a lipstick and "spokes-product" for the collection of "M·A·C loves Barbie." The interview began by covering the range of places the ingredients for makeup come from, and proceeded to explore what was gained when the two companies teamed to advertise their products, as well as the consequences of marketing to 'tweens and teens. Other topics researched by students included commercial bath tiles, cell phones, the Scion car, and shoes. The students in the class seemed to enjoy the project and to throw themselves into both the research and presentation phases.

EVALUATING THE LESSONS

When students queried me about what they could research, my standard answer was "anything," an answer always modified by, "but be aware that complex products with a lot of manufacturing and ingredients and complex advertising schemes will be harder to research well." The mechanisms students used to choose their products generally had to do either with things they loved or things about which they were cynical; the caveat, for many, went unheeded. Bolin and Blandy (2003) note the difficulty of researching across disciplinary fields. How do we find information about a product, and especially about its manufacturing? Given the time and physical limitations of classrooms, most research is secondary, not primary. If the products were restricted to locally made, at least part of the process could be primary research, but given our global economy, most research will be heavily reliant on secondary sources. My conclusion is that developing research skills should be part of this project.

Perhaps the biggest issue in teaching this project arose from the use (or lack) of analysis. The following research and analysis instructions were given to students.

- Determine what you know about the object and what you will have to research about your object, such as: How, where, and to whom is the object presented in advertising? Who buys it (see if you can go beyond presumptions and guesses on this)? How is it produced—from the materials used to make it, to its assembly, to its construction, to how it got into your hands?
- Research the production processes of your object. Find other ads for it and note where, how, and to whom it is marketed. Research who actually buys the product.
- Consider how concepts we've been learning about (e.g., desire, denotations and connotations, interpellation, power/knowledge—and any applicable concepts from the readings) work in terms of this object and its advertisement.

Many students did well with these guidelines. Yet there were disappointments, presentations that relied too heavily on the claims of the manufacturer as a basis for knowledge and resulted in weak reincarnations of ads the company itself might produce or commission. These presentations seemed to miss the point of a commodity fetishism project. "Comprehending how to 'read' the artifacts and expressions of a culture is a complex activity and one that requires focused skills and learning (McFee & Degge, 1980)," note Bolin and Blandy (2003, p. 251). They further explain, through Kingery (1996), that " 'The grammar of things is related to, but more complex and difficult to decipher than, the grammar of words... because artifacts are tools as well as signals, signs, and symbols. Their use and functions are multiple and intertwined. Much of their meaning is subliminal and unconscious' (p. 1)" (p. 251). The disappointments of these presentations suggest the importance of students working on the development of analytical skills "that will enable us to 'read' carefully and insightfully the cultural expressions that permeate our world" (Bolin & Blandy, p. 251). A general set of questions to put the object through might be a place to start. It also suggests increased teacher/group guidance so that the specifics of each object can be further probed.

When I expressed to students that they could research anything, I later reflected if the choice should have been completely open. For example, should the objects have had to do with art? Similar to the tiles chosen by one pair of students, where do paints and inks come from? Clay and glaze materials? Steel, bronze, lead or aluminum for casting? Wood? What processes and mechanisms take place to bring those products to the artist or art student? Who is involved? How and to whom are they advertised? And what about firms that advertise by using art? For example, why is art used to advertise everything from jeans, shoe polish, and hair products to computers, copiers, vodka, soft drinks, and credit cards (Tarateta, 2001; Sturken & Cartwright, 2001)? But requiring objects associated with "art" draws us away from the broadening of "art" to material and visual culture in our field, which makes me reconsider a predetermined focus area for study. Still, it is worth considering how we might guide and help students choose what they will research.

Students in the commodity fetishism project were not asked to make in a traditional studio classroom sense, beyond drawing their objects, but they did create innovative presentations, as earlier described. One of the questions that Kader (2003) grapples with in her article on teaching material culture is the expectation by many students, parents, administrators, and art teachers that students make things: "They question the legitimacy of engaging students in a conversation about objects in the name of art" (p. 22). She concludes, as do many people working for change in teaching art, that learning about art and artifacts is an important pursuit of art that encourages understanding of culture, material culture, and ourselves. But she also points out that students can still be inspired by their increased understandings to make in a more knowing way. The issue of teaching studio-based art is part of an ongoing dialogue in the field, and related to the profound sea of changes taking place in art/material/visual culture education.

Finally, the quality of some productions was flawed, especially the audio tracks. A new set of skills is needed as students undertake electronic media. Some have learned these skills, while others assume use of tools (video and audio devices, PowerPoint and KeyNote programs) is transparent. Tutorials will help bridge this gap in a subsequent teaching.

Despite these reflections on improvements, the commodity fetishism exercise was a success. Students were keen to research objects in their lives and able to apply concepts learned in the class to their analyses. They were highly inventive in their presentations of the material they wanted to convey, and some have gone on to adapt the project to their own classrooms. My reflections suggest how to strengthen the teaching of commodity fetishism and help students develop their critical reflective practice as material culture educators.

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ENDNOTES

1 The presentation is available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifpT_sXVY08

2 The Armani Eau pour Homme interview is available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLLdBoQ6CzM

The Single-Artifact Approach to Material Culture Studies: A Perspective from New Zealand ■ JILL SMITH

In this chapter, I present an approach to material culture studies from the perspective of a Pakeha/European New Zealander, in which I draw upon my knowledge and understanding of *nga rakau korero*, the talking sticks of the indigenous Maori people of New Zealand.[1] My focus on this particular artifact, as studied within the broader context of Maori art and culture in my preservice secondary teacher education programs, was influenced by the way in which *nga rakau korero* reflect the beliefs, values, and attitudes of Maori. My approach was also shaped by findings from my doctoral research, *Art Education in New Zealand: Issues of Culture, Diversity and Difference* (Smith, 2007a), for which I observed the nature and extent of material culture studies in secondary schools. In response to issues encountered in the research, I drew upon the conceptual framework of *nga rakau korero* and, as a Pakeha artist and educator, constructed my own series of artifacts. One aim was to broaden art educators' understandings of the potential of a multidisciplinary and multisensory approach to artifact study. Another was to use an approach that seeks the perspectives of people within the culture being studied. A third aim was to demonstrate that artifacts can be used as a "voice" with which to challenge perceptions of art, culture, and pedagogy. Complementing my approach are two examples that illustrate how study of this single artifact, the talking stick, offered students rich and educationally significant experiences in art.

MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES IN ART EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

My research sought to discover the extent to which 10 art teachers in five secondary schools in New Zealand took into account the ethnic diversity and cultural differences of year 9-10 students (mostly 13-14 year olds) in their art programs. The study was underpinned by an interrogation of pedagogical practices for culturally inclusive art education, analysis of curriculum policy, and a critique of meanings and interpretations of culture as connected to art and teaching, students and teachers, and society within and beyond schools. The study of material culture supported aspects and features of my research. During the fieldwork I looked for evidence of students studying the broad range of human-constructed or human-mediated objects and forms that are used as identifiers and expressions of culture and society (Dant, 2004; Edwards, Gosden & Phillips, 2006; Stott, 1987), and studied through a range of curricular approaches taught from a material culture studies perspective (Bolin, 1995; Bolin & Blandy, 2003; Knappett, 2005; Schlereth, 1985).

A key finding of the fieldwork was that approaches to material culture studies did not include folk art, mass media, crafts, or the decorative and applied arts. Study of popular culture was the exception. However, rather than encourage students to investigate forms of popular culture encountered in their daily lives as a means of "understanding and appreciating their cultural heritage" (Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p. 247), superficial identifiers were used. Specifically, students employed nationalistic icons—known as *kiwiana* (see Barnett & Wolfe, 1989)—as metaphors for "New Zealand" culture; these icons included kiwi birds, plastic tikis, rugby balls, sheep, buzzy-bees toys, jandals, paua shell, Maori dolls, and the silver fern.

More prevalent in programs was the study of artifacts of the indigenous Maori, which teachers attributed to the well-established place of Maori art in curriculum policy.[2] I observed that students were not confined to a superficial examination of the outward appearance of artifacts. Rather, students were encouraged by their teachers to investigate the cultural context of both objects and makers, and to distinguish between customary and contemporary practices. There were, however, no opportunities for students to experience the multisensory dimension of artifacts that went further than the "visual" (Classen, 1993; Edwards et al., 2006),

FIGURE 1. Maori orators seated at the front (with Tenga's *rakau korero*—talking stick), waiting to speak at Ngati Poneke Marae, Wellington. From left, Tenga Rangitauira, Joseph Te Poroa Malcom, and Riini Paraire. *Photograph by Ken George.*

or to gain an interdisciplinary perspective beyond the "object" (Knappett, 2005). Neither were the voices of those from within the culture sought out for discussion.

A SINGLE ARTIFACT: THE MULTISENSORY DIMENSION OF *nga rakau korero*

To illustrate the value of a broader approach to material culture studies, which could be used with pre-service art teachers and in professional development, I drew upon my long-held interest in *nga rakau korero*, the ceremonial staffs used by Maori on the *marae* (the meeting place of Maori tradition). An important part of my study of this single-artifact of material culture was to comprehend a "wide range of *kinds* of information as well as to understand specific details" (Stott, 1987, p. 14). Influenced by differing approaches to artifact study (see Fleming, 1982; Schlereth, 1985; Stott, 1987), I engaged with actual examples of *nga rakau korero*. This required analysis of their physical forms, function, and aesthetic qualities; investigation into the socio-anthropological and contemporary contexts in which they were conceived, carved, and used; and an examination of changes in style and usage over time. Prompted by Fleming's (1982) approach, I compared stylized and naturalistic carvings from various tribal areas and evaluated the differing effects of these works.

Although *nga rakau korero*, together with historical photographs of Maori holding ceremonial staffs, are displayed in museums as ethnographic or anthropological objects, the talking stick is inseparable from its cultural context in terms of conveying meaning and nonverbal information. Maori scholar Hirini Moko Mead (1986) uses horticultural metaphors to describe differing periods in the development of *toi whakairo* (the art of Maori carving). He situates the staffs used by Maori chiefs in the *Puawaitanga* (the Flowering) period (1500-1800), immediately prior to European settlement and into the first half of the 19th century. Staffs were used "to fight with, to indicate authority and *mana* (status) and to talk with" (p. 176). Although it is uncertain whether the straight, carved stick was an indigenous form, there is material evidence in photographs that it was being used from 1840, at the time of the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi-The Treaty of Waitangi (Mead, 1986, p. 178). It is likely that

FIGURE 2. Maori orators engaged in *whaikorero* (speeches) at Ngati Poneke Marae, Wellington. From left, Lindsay McLeod, Ruka Broughton, and Huirangi Waikerepuru. *Photograph by Ken George.*

the hooked form of talking stick, developed in the late nineteenth century, was based on the walking sticks of the British colonizers. In carving traditions within Maoridom, stylized human figures are usually depicted on *nga rakau korero*, interspersed by sections of carved surface pattern (Neich, 2001). The most common naturalistic feature of hooked forms is the transformation of the handle into a bird's head with a long, curved beak.

Although a physical examination of *nga rakau korero* provided the primary data in my study, as Schlereth (1985) recommends for the investigation of material culture, I also attended *hui* (meetings) on various *marae* and became more familiar with the use of talking sticks by Maori orators. These experiences reinforced my view that the kinds of information gathered from an artifact study alone were insufficient and incomplete. As Bolin and Blandy (2003) argue, the purpose of investigating material culture is to "learn about the people who make, use, respond to and preserve these phenomena" (p. 252). My observations of Maori orators, and conversations with many of them, helped me realize that my study could not be confined to visual analysis, but had to include consideration of other sensory experience. An extension of the concept of material culture itself beyond visual examination of the object, or "beyond 'things' to materially expressed and phenomenologically expressed ideas" (Edwards et al., 2006, p. 2), provided a more holistic model for my approach. It prompted me to consider the "whole sensory register" (p. 3).

As is common in oral societies, where the spoken word carries great weight, the making of *whaikorero* (speeches) and listening to them was, and remains, a social convention of great importance to Maori. The orator, nearly always male, is held in high esteem in the Maori world. *Te kawa o te marae* (etiquette on the marae) centers upon "the regulation of oratory... who may speak, in what order, and how they structure their remarks" (Salmond, 2005, p. 147). A great deal of repetition and historical allusion was used in classical *whaikorero* and, even today, a skilled orator is not only a master of genealogy, ancient chants, local history, and proverbs, but is also a performer (Mead, 1986). At a *hui* the orator's words are listened to with respect and their performance observed with great interest. Throughout the speeches the *tangata whenua* (local people) and *manuhiri* (visitors) sit on opposite benches,

facing each other across the marae. The orators sit at the front, with the old women behind, followed by the rest of their party. When an orator is ready to speak he calls a "warning shout... which claims the marae for the speaker, and catches the attention of his audience" (Salmond, 2005, p. 159). The most common utterance is "Tihei, mauri ora!" ("I sneeze, it is life!"). Having risen from his bench the orator picks up his ceremonial staff, an indispensable prop for a dramatic performance, then steps onto the *marae*. His acting and use of dramatic gesture give emphasis to his words.

It is central to the study of material culture that objects made by humans reflect the beliefs of individuals who made them and of the larger society to which they belong (Dant, 2004; Prown, 1982; Schlereth, 1985). These objects represent "unfolding patterns of social life," and cannot be comprehended exclusively within a visual and aesthetic framework (Gell, 1998, p. 6). When *nga rakau korero* is displayed as an ethnographic or anthropological object in a museum it becomes passive, albeit beautifully crafted and aesthetically appealing. In the hands of an orator it becomes an active part of a multisensory experience in which the Western value of seeing and hearing as primary senses is expanded to include sensory cultural dispositions of speech, drama, and movement (Classen, 1993).

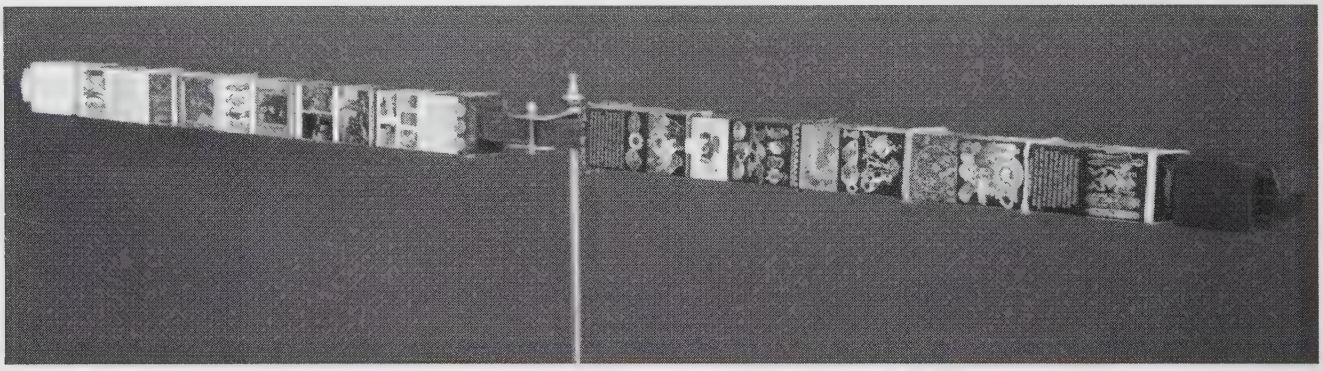


FIGURE 3. Jill Smith's talking stick, *The 'best' and the 'rest,'* positioned horizontally on its pivotal axis. *Photograph by Kerry-Ann Boyle.*

FIGURE 4A (RIGHT). Jill Smith with *The ultimate cultural icon,* one of 14 talking sticks in her installation, "Talking My Way Through Culture," 2007. *Photograph by Kerry-Ann Boyle.*

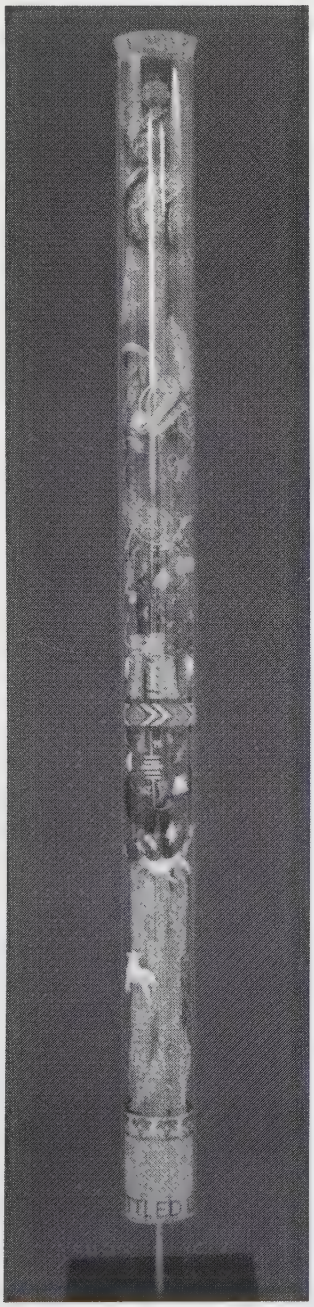
MY RE-CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THIS SINGLE-ARTIFACT OF MATERIAL CULTURE

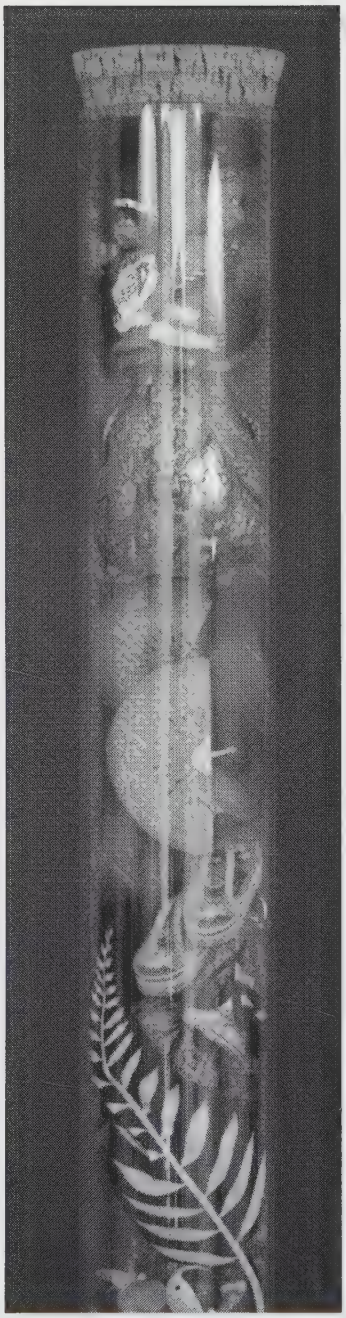
The outcomes of my research inspired me to use my knowledge of *nga rakau korero* as a starting point for transposing academic discourse from text into a visual form, and for exploring the multisensory experience of a single artifact. As a Pakeha, I have had to acquire an understanding of Maori artifacts, and be sensitive and respectful of Maori cultural values. Consulting *kaumatua* (Maori elders) and other Maori in the community about my proposal was the first step in the creation of 14 artifacts for an installation, "Talking My Way Through Culture" (Smith, 2007b). The next phase was to reflect upon the means and media through which my "voice" could be presented. My challenge was to reconceptualize the customary concept of Maori *rakau korero* to make artifacts that neither replicated nor appropriated their forms and cultural significance. An aspect I stress in my preservice course with art teachers (who are predominantly Pakeha/New Zealanders) is that non-Maori cannot make Maori art. Instead of making Maori art, non-Maori can learn about customary and contemporary forms to develop ideas for making their own art. With this in mind, I decided that my talking sticks would "speak"

FIGURES 4B AND 4C. Details of *The 'best'... and the 'rest.'* Photographs by Kerry-Ann Boyle.

for themselves, although they could also be used to speak with. This decision enabled me to use non-traditional forms, imagery, media, and techniques in my own artmaking.

My talking sticks were inspired by a number of interpretations of culture that are significant for the pedagogical practices of art teachers working with students in culturally diverse societies. Employing the metaphor "talking my way through culture," these artifacts became the vehicle through which I challenged perceptions of art, culture, and education. In my thesis I postulated that Western art, and its European cultural contexts, continues to pervade art education in New Zealand secondary schools. The literature on art and culture of the Western aesthetic, which emphasizes differences between "high" and "low" culture (Efland, Freedman & Stuhr, 1996), provided a rich source of ideas. My talking stick, *The ultimate cultural icon*, featured 80 representations of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. Classified as a supreme example of high culture, the *Mona Lisa* has been canonized in art and art historical discourse and held up by art historians, theorists, critics, and the public at large as the ultimate cultural icon. Presenting the images in slide mounts parodied the "projection"



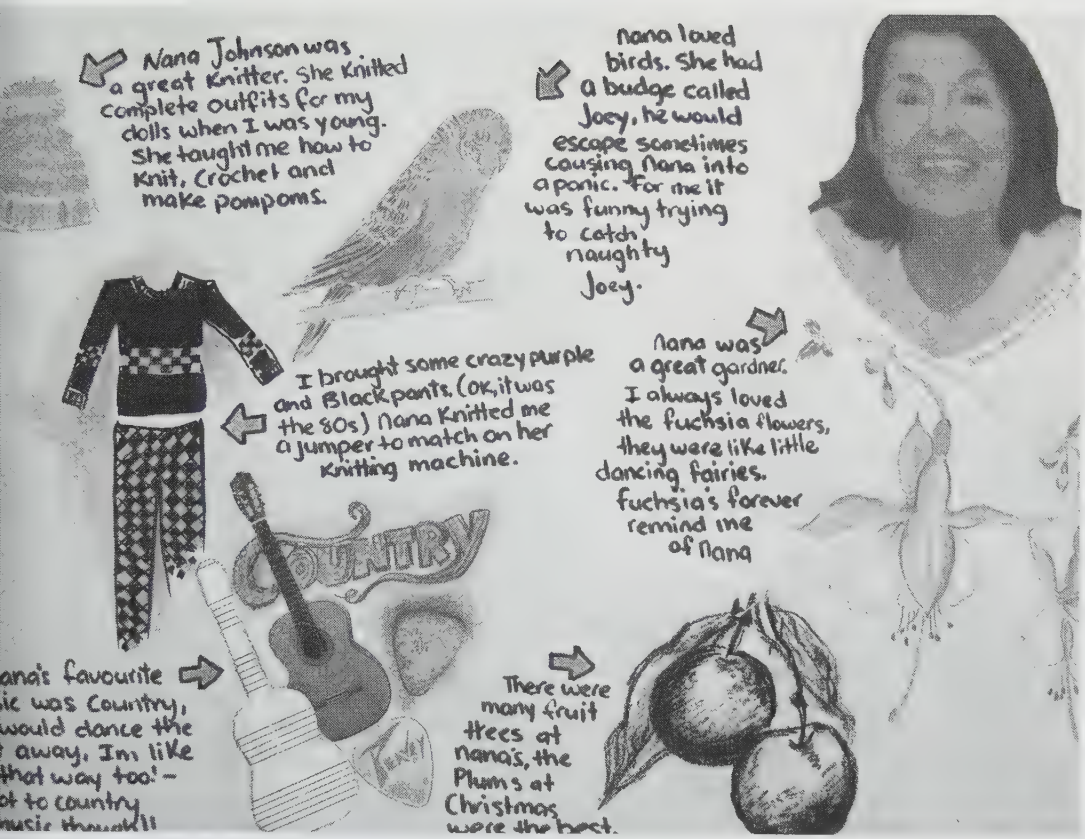


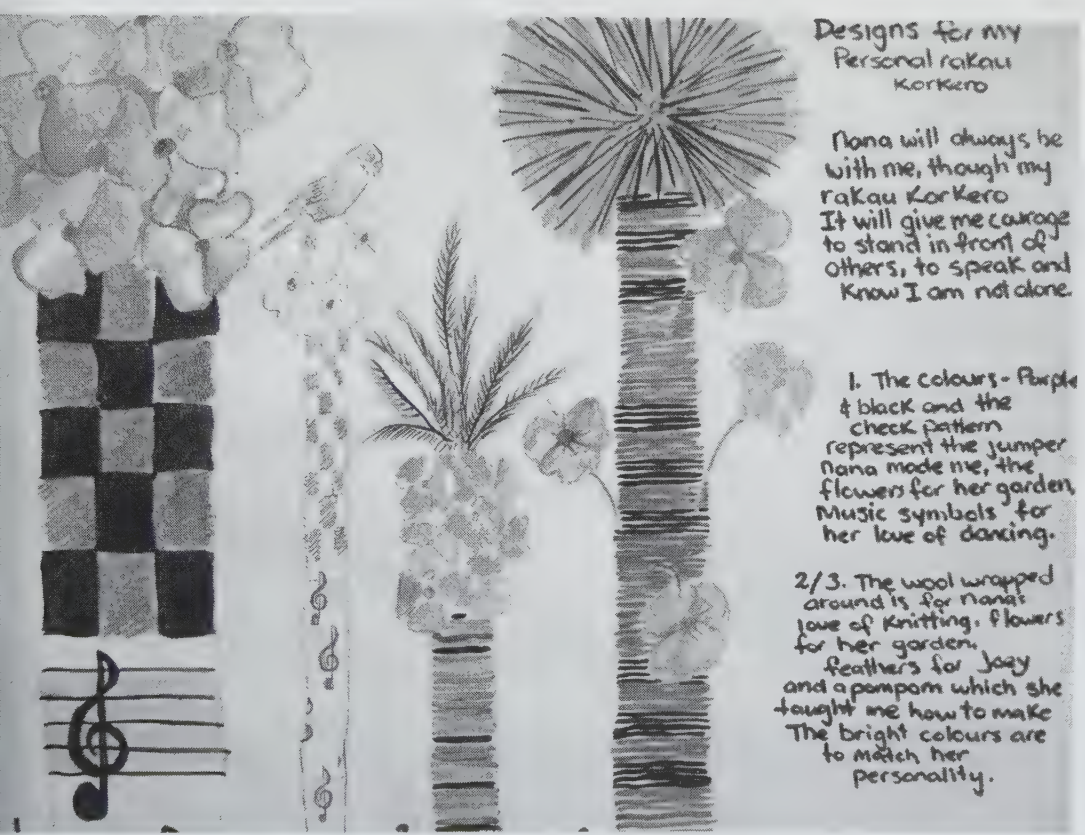
FIGURES 5A (ABOVE) AND 5B (RIGHT). Jill Smith's talking stick *Bottled Godzone*, and detail. *Photographs by Kerry-Ann Boyle.*

of the *Mona Lisa* image in a multiplicity of art, cultural, and educational contexts and, as an artistic device, reinforced the ways in which this painting has "captured" the imagination of other creators. This talking stick not only drew attention to the continued reverence for high art of the Western aesthetic, but challenged teachers to consider how the Western art canon, which holds that the "best art in the world has been produced by Europeans... men... and... individual geniuses" (Chalmers, 1999, p. 173), connects with the lives of young people.

Issues of exclusion and marginalization, an important dimension of my research, influenced the pivotal artifact in the installation. *The 'best' and the 'rest'* was a double-ended talking stick, with each shaft separated by a handle. A white classical temple at one end, illustrating "the best," denoted the dominance of high culture. At the other, a black *whare* (Maori meeting house) represented how the Western world categorizes "the rest" as low culture. On both shafts five bands of indicative images, separated by divisions of selective linear media which parody cultural lineage, were supported by text extrapolated from my thesis. The "best" featured images and text that drew attention to artworks of classical antiquity, the Middle Ages and Christianity, the Renaissance, modernist art of the 19th century, and critically acclaimed works of the 20th century, mostly by male artists. The "rest" commented upon the marginalized forms of tribal art, folk art, decorative arts, popular arts, and the craft work of women. This double-ended talking stick was positioned horizontally, on a pivot, to demonstrate that the rest of art is as important as the so-called best of art. To turn the stick on its axis, thus pointing either end into an upward position, was to express a preference, advance an argument, or engender debate.

It is argued that art education, at least in Western nations, has been bedeviled by the concept of material cultural artifacts as manifestations of a culture (Chalmers, 1999; Efland, Freedman & Stuhr, 1996). Commensurate with this viewpoint, students in the fieldwork study employed superficial identifiers of 'New Zealand' culture. There was little interest in the impact that material objects have on contemporary life (Dant, 2004), or in Hodder's (2003) argument that artifacts are "not simply a passive by-product of life" (p. 159). Bottled in clear acrylic tubing, and anchored in place by a cork, *Bottled Godzone* contained iconic manifestations, referred to earlier, of life in "Godzone."[3] Plundered from tourist outlets, these signifiers were used to question curriculum and pedagogical practices that persist in treating material culture as superficial and passive by-products of life. This talking stick challenged art educators to address how active manifestations of material culture can impact upon and be used to confront contemporary society. My aim with these, and the other 11 talking sticks, was to provoke teachers to examine the static art curriculum and pedagogical practices they often adopt with students, despite the fact those students live in a multicultural, global society.


Nana Johnson was a great Knitter. She Knitted complete outfits for my dolls when I was young. She taught me how to Knit, Crochet and make pompoms.
nana loved birds. She had a budgie called Joey, he would escape sometimes causing Nana into a panic. For me it was funny trying to catch naughty Joey.
I brought some crazy purple and Black pants. (OK, it was the 80s) Nana Knitted me a jumper to match on her Knitting machine.
Nana was a great gardner. I always loved the fuchsia flowers, they were like little dancing fairies. fuchsia's forever remind me of Nana
COUNTRY
ana's favourite ic was Country, would dance the away. Im like that way too! - ot to country
There were many fruit trees at nana's, the Plums at Christmas were the best.


Designs for my Personal rakau Korkero
Nana will always be with me, though my rakau Korkero It will give me courage to stand in front of others, to speak and Know I am not alone.
1. The colours - Purple & black and the check pattern represent the jumper nana made me, the flowers for her garden, Music symbols for her love of dancing.
2/3. The wool wrapped around is for nana's love of Knitting, flowers for her garden. feathers for Joey and a pompom which she taught me how to make The bright colours are to match her personality.

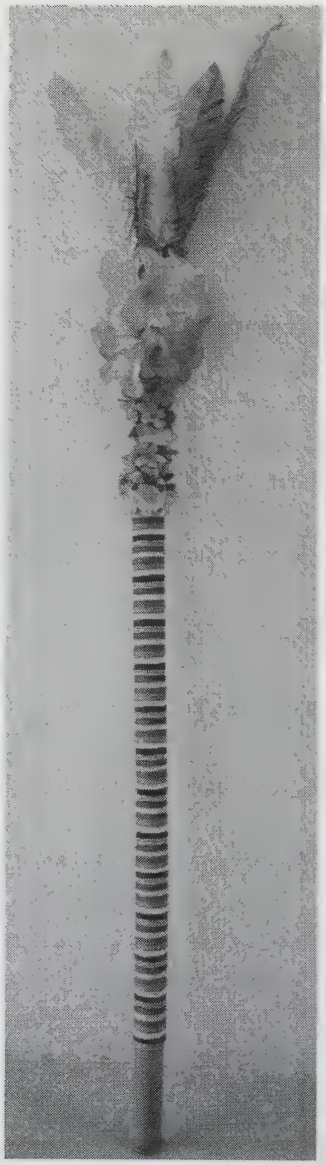


FIGURE 6A (ABOVE). Leanne Wilson's personal *rakau korero* for her significant female person, Nana Johnson. *Photograph by Jill Smith.*

FIGURES 6B AND 6C (LEFT). Leanne Wilson's ideas and design pages for the talking stick for Nana Johnson. *Photographs by Jill Smith.*

The final challenge was to present my talking sticks as "active" artifacts. My solution was an installation that drew upon the concept of the Talking Stick Circle, an ancient tool for assisting in making decisions and strengthening communities (Baldwin, 1994). But rather than pass the sticks from person to person, I arranged them in a large circle. People were able to move around, within, and beyond the circle to "read" or "listen" to each of the artifacts. To facilitate earnest discourse, many pivoted *The 'best' and 'the rest'* to varying positions. In her review of the exhibition, Anderson (2008) focused on the active involvement, rather than passive scrutiny, of those present:

> The talking sticks had their voices realised in the discussions prompted around the circle.... They stimulated us, drew us into conversation, and invited debate... [they] were more like a prod, a sharp stick, a poke in the eye for the viewer. Jill questioned assumptions, and prodded us to talk about and reassess our own. In this, the talking went well beyond the walls. (pp. 130-131)

APPLICATIONS OF THE SINGLE-ARTIFACT APPROACH

My example opens up numerous possibilities for the study of single artifacts of material culture, as well as for investigation and interpretation of its various forms, objects, and expressions within a variety of contexts. Several of my preservice teachers have modified this model for their own use. Mikel, a Pakeha teacher, used the concept of the talking stick in a multidisciplinary introductory art unit with 14-year-olds. Mikel and his students learned appropriate *reo Maori* (language) with which to write their own *mihimihi* (greeting),[4] and constructed a personal talking stick around this. Students used the stick and the *mihimihi* to introduce themselves to their *whanau* (family) of classmates. The students agreed that gaining knowledge of *whaikorero* (speech-making) was a new and exciting dimension of their art program.

Another student of mine, Leanne, also Pakeha, introduced her female students to the meanings and forms of talking sticks of the indigenous Northwest Coast First Nations people of North America and the message sticks of the Australian Aborigine. Students visited websites featuring the Talking Stick performance and film festivals of Aboriginal art and expression, which are held annually in Vancouver and Sydney. Leanne and her students wrote stories about a significant female person in their lives and constructed talking sticks with which to share their messages about this individual. These personal *rakau* were presented to a number of the significant women who were able to be present at this sharing, which was a most moving occasion. In both of these examples, the teachers recognized the validity and value of drawing multiple viewpoints from various fields of study. They demonstrated awareness of the importance of interdisciplinary (Knappett, 2005) and multisensory experiences (Bolin & Blandy, 2003).

SUMMARY

The single-artifact approach to material culture studies need not be confined to studying artifacts from an anthropological perspective. As a means of understanding and appreciating their cultural heritage, students could focus upon exploring a single artifact associated with, for example, folk art (Congdon & Blandy, 1999), the decorative arts (Miller, 1997), popular culture (Dant, 2004), or the material culture of gender (Martinez & Ames, 1997). Single artifacts provide a multiplicity of starting points for cultural inquiry that uses physical objects as primary data. As illustrated, this approach does not have to preclude a multidisciplinary and/or multisensory approach to a single or particular expression of culture.

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ENDNOTES

1 With the arrival of European navigators, traders and missionaries to New Zealand in the early 19th century, Maori (the indigenous people/original inhabitants) applied the descriptive term "Pakeha" (white man) to these strangers whose skin was a strange and abnormal condition. To distinguish themselves, they adopted the term "Maori," which means "normal" or "natural" (Walker, 1989).

2 The "bicultural" partnership between Maori and European was established in 1840 with the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi-The Treaty of Waitangi by more than 500 Maori chiefs and William Hobson representing the British Crown. Although never ratified by the Crown, the Treaty is considered the founding document of New Zealand. Since the 1970s, study of Maori art and culture has been mandated in curriculum policy.

3 "God's Own Country" is the title of a poem about New Zealand written by Thomas Bracken in the 1880s. Often abbreviated to "Godzone," it is a phrase that has been used for more than 120 years by New Zealanders to describe their homeland.

4 *Mihimihi* are introductory speeches which take place at the beginning of a formal gathering, and establish links with other people present. They involve individuals standing to introduce themselves by sharing their *whakapapa* (genealogy, ancestral ties) and other relevant information.

Moving From Mimetic Studio Art Practices to Student Critical Study of Material Culture

JAMES W. BEQUETTE AND JUDI WARRICK PETKAU

Using a middle school art teacher's unit on Mimbres ceramics as a starting point, we argue these ancient artifacts represent material culture created by humans that we do not know now and can never truly know. The hidden, marginalized, and unknowable histories of 1,000-year-old coil-constructed pottery—pillaged burial goods (Brody, 1977) of lost context, commerce, and colonial domination—pose disturbing challenges for art educators committed to conceptions of critical pedagogy (Karp & Lavine, 1991; Tavin & Hausman, 2004; Fecho, 2001). We explore why critical cultural questions and narratives that reveal such troubling histories are often not only excluded from museum presentation, but also from classroom inquiry (Grande, 2004; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Bequette, 2005). Through a careful and critical sociocultural analysis (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007) of the enactment of a specific museum-provided Mimbres curriculum in seventh-grade art classrooms, this chapter attends to the dynamic structure of these teaching and learning activities through discourse (Wells, 1996), the shifting identities and power relationships enacted, and—in moments of agency—determining what was made and/or remade by participants.

While positing that most teachers' understanding—and usually that of their students—stays rooted in discussion of the knowable, the commonly held, or the universal belief of others, our research suggests that in art education such understanding is too often limited to an investigation of an artifact's formal properties of line, shape, and composition, rather than analysis of the circumstances of its human origin. Many art teachers are hesitant or openly resistant and unprepared to teach about material culture, "particularly human-made objects not classified as fine art" (Bolin, 1995, p. 1) that invite students to speculate and ask questions about meaning. Those who do experiment with enacting critical pedagogy quickly learn that doing so can be a sustained, if messy, encounter (Ellsworth, 1989) that may subsume class time once allotted largely to studio experiences. Fears of critical pedagogy resembling "social studies" teaching in the art classroom ignore the interdisciplinary potential of arts learning (Efland, Freedman, & Stuhr, 1996; Geahigan, 1999).

WHITE TEACHERS, WHITE STUDENTS, CRITICAL RESPONSE TO INDIGENOUS MATERIAL CULTURE

As part of an ongoing collaborative research partnership the authors of this chapter—two university-affiliated White teacher educators; one museum-based, the other housed in the college of education—mentored an action research study conducted by a midcareer art teacher with concerns much like those described here. As a practitioner with a history of working in affluent, mostly White, suburban schools, our colleague reflected on the shallowness of her past attempts to include American Indian content in art curriculum. Her desire to practice differently fueled questions about whether, as White teachers, we can ever effectively teach about Indigenous cultures: "Why am I doing this again? It's sort of pandering, and I want to culturally... close the gaps a bit... [but] how do I do this? How can I know everything?"

Sociocultural theories (Freire, 1998; Giroux, 1995; hooks, 1995), conceptions of teacher action research (Kemmis, 1999; Zeichner, 1995), and critical discourse analysis (Gee, 1999; Lewis, Enciso, &, Moje, 2007) help to ground our work. We frame learning as a "collaborative conversation and association between students and educators" (Congdon & Blandy, 2001, p. 274), and suggest that attention to shifting identities and power relations within a learning activity offer a way to better find moments of agency and learning (Lewis, Enciso, &

Moje, 2007). To aid our investigation of these complex relations, we consider how genres of discourse (Gee, 1999, Fairclough, 2001) are constructed and used within the specific activity of interpreting meanings from and about the objects of ancient Mimbres pottery.

The action research project we helped our teacher colleague design permitted assessing whether weaving critically problematic inquiry-based material culture studies (Bolin, 1992-1993, 1995; Bolin & Blandy 2003; Congdon & Blandy, 2001) into pedagogy would improve student learning and critical response to artifacts. In short, this was an investigation of two different enactments of the Mimbres curriculum with two distinct groups of seventh graders. In the second, revised teaching episode, the teacher and her students were involved in situated yet shifting negotiation of meaning, rather than the teacher communicating the fixed meaning, definition, or value of the art objects. The study of ancient Indigenous pottery undertaken by those White, middle-class, suburban seventh graders was a layered affair, involving intersecting voices across cultural and institutional spaces and across time. In given moments and places, some of these voices communicate, some are marginalized, and others are silent. Yet within structures of power, it is in this ongoing interaction, between active and evaluative speakers, that meaning is made.

In our work, three art educators (the teacher and her two university collaborators) are intentionally and actively striving to bring more voices—voices of others not present or represented—forward to complicate the class' social interpretation of the Mimbres ceramics. With funds from a small university grant, a museum fieldtrip was added to a third and fourth iteration of our colleague's pottery unit. The museum visit increased the cultural depth of the teacher's previous lessons—a didactic slide show of Mimbres ceramics in the museum's collection and a capstone studio project: making clay bowls. We argue the addition of the museum experience broadened the students' critical engagement through physical contact with actual artifacts (Stott, as cited in Bolin, 1995), eight bowls arranged on a worktable in the museum's stark white meeting room, permitting out-of-case-inspection of the ancient artifacts. Students leaned in close to the bowls. Some sniffed, and most expressed excitement in their posture and attention to the activity.

A Middle School Art Teacher's Struggle to Shift Practice

Analysis of the teacher and student discourse when introducing the critically focused, redesigned, Mimbres unit reveals the teacher's struggle to shift her practice. Our colleague tried to impress upon students the value and validity of the Mimbres objects and a broader cultural investigation as art curriculum:

> I came to the Mimbres pottery as something that I wanted to bring to [you] because, on viewing the actual bowls in the museum, which you guys will be able to do, I found that…the bowls themselves had a certain… well I just thought they were really beautiful. I thought they were beautiful not only because of the designs on them but also because they had this kind of energy or presence that you know these had been something that humans had produced… under very, very, pretty harsh conditions.

The teacher made a point of reminding her students of an earlier discrete art history and art criticism unit in which they focused on the study of art prints, with no studio production. This curricular organization is consistent with her initial training in Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE). She explained to her students that this Mimbres unit would be more like their previous practice of art history and criticism than studio. She shifted to a modality (Gee, 1999) that was apologetic, differentiating the "pleasurable" activities of "playing" with art materials from the different approach this unit will take. In this introduction she negotiated something of a bargain with her seventh graders. In lieu of standard studio-based classes, in these lessons they will have the special opportunity to visit the museum and broaden their understanding of the ancient Mimbres culture.

Yet throughout the 2-week experience, she maintained her power and authority as teacher to direct the art curriculum. This episode of talk reveals her personal understanding that Mimbres pots are foremost art objects of technical virtuosity and formal beauty, the areas she describes as her "expertise." In noting the feat of producing such beauty under "harsh" conditions, her backhanded compliment aligns more with Western art historical framing of "primitive" art. This is a challenging moment of professional struggle as the teacher attempts to shift her practice toward areas of less expertise and to shift the expectations of her art students, "but also because [Mimbres bowls] had this kind of energy or presence." Her utterance reveals personal critical curiosity and recognition that these objects offer much more to investigate both for her and for her students—they also permit agency as a teacher to change.

TEACHING AND LEARNING WITH CONTESTED CULTURAL OBJECTS

Troubling narratives undergirded the art students' inquiry-based learning. For example, Mimbres pottery, tools, and human remains were excavated from a burial site in New Mexico in the 1920s by an archeology professor at our university (Brody & Swintzell, 1996). After passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990, only the pots—housed for years in the anthropology department—were transferred to the campus art museum and situated as works of "fine art" in their presentation (Weisman Art Museum, 2008). Critical podcasts prepared by the seventh graders as the capstone activity of the re-imagined unit offered counter-narratives, a range of responses to the many challenging questions of ownership and power that surround these ancient objects (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000).

Discourse of the Museum as Arbiter of a Universal Aesthetic

Notions of the pervasive power of the Western institutional discourse of primitivism, evolutionary progress, and the fixed scientific knowledge of a shared history, however, received little emphasis in the teaching and, consequently, the students' investigative work. Informational texts—published online and in print by the museum—for teacher and students to reference reify dominant and generally unquestioned institutional discourse that assumes the power of the museum as colonial protector and collector, as arbiter of a universal aesthetic and whose ownership and work serves the 'public good.'

In previous iterations of the seventh-grade Mimbres unit, the teacher deferred completely to the authority of these texts produced by 'experts.' In the final redesigned unit, the teacher worked to question these museum texts as the only valid and valuable sources of information, but found she often deferred to "what the scholars say." One resource text did offer the voice of a contemporary Pueblo potter, and although this was referenced, it did not have the same central power as the more accessible texts produced by the museum.

Museum Educator Pushes Students to Rethink Historical Narratives

Actual contact with Mimbres material culture in a museum setting altered the curriculum in a way the seventh graders ranked almost as engaging as making their own clay pots. Looking closely at the pots, first in reproduction form and then the real objects, generated student questions about their origin, use, and meaning. Discussion of the intentional holes, the physical thinness and age of the clay, the qualities of the painted lines and firing marks, the curious designs, the scale and the dimensionality were generated only after close observation of the real material objects. As the museum educator attempted to insert missing historical narratives and make lateral connections to students' lives, her assumptions about the objects and about the students made breaking out of dominant historic discourse problematic. She explained to the seventh graders:

> These bowls were found inverted on people's skulls in their burials, and if you just think about that, how would you feel if somebody came to your like grandparents' um grave or site where they're buried, and dug them up and pulled like the pin off your grandma's [blouse] and took it and put it into a museum as this beautiful thing. I mean that's a little bit weird.

The museum educator tried to problematize this complex history for students through assumed shared experience, such as Anglo American burial practices, family relations, and family heirlooms. She later questioned the injustice of comparing the unearthing and confiscation of a hypothetical deceased grandma's ornament with the loss of Mimbres gravesites. If this loss and narrative is incommensurable, why should one try to find a comparison? Doesn't that further marginalize the trauma endured by those whose ancestors and cultural goods were removed? Can a sense of empathy be generated in this way, or is this just another form of cultural mimicry?

In the struggle to understand the pots' burial use—placement over the face or head of the deceased—one student pushed to heighten the gore factor for his classmates' entertainment: While gesturing "chopping" the head away from a bowl, he asked whether "any of the skulls molded onto the bowls" prior to their exhibition. This did illustrate critical engagement, albeit in a very dark and sensationalized way, with the propriety of museums' not exhibiting human remains and objects together if they were found interred together. Encounters such as this demonstrate the deep challenge of enacting critical pedagogy, which remains a practice of struggle to consistently create a classroom habit of critical reflection and at times, support student and teacher discomfort and hard conversations about culture, history, race, and power (Ellsworth, 1989).

Teacher Educator Connects Mimbres Potters and Contemporary Native Artists

Back in the classroom, the students were challenged to collaboratively research and create critical videos that explored an assigned set of significant questions. The university-based teacher educator assisted and supported the art teacher's efforts to help students conduct research that generated content for their podcasts. Discussion was split between technical questions of production and critical questions of video subject matter. His well-intended efforts to help students connect Mimbres culture to contemporary Native artists, encouraging students to locate Pueblo and other Native resources online, proved to be shortsighted pedagogy. Although groups of student researchers were challenged to attend to diverse perspectives and narratives surrounding the Indigenous civilization and material culture on which the pottery unit focused, the teacher educator spent insufficient time scaffolding these same White seventh graders' Internet exploration of contemporary American Indian tribes and communities. Too often the group videos featured both images and text that perpetuated deficit assumptions and mass-media stereotypes that still haunt 21st-century Indigenous societies. And important Native discourses of oppression, racism, resilience, and sovereignty were noticeably missing from most podcasts.

Not surprisingly, students' methodology stayed rooted in fact-finding, particularly looking for definitive answers—and that meant going to the powerful and scholarly dominant discourse and repeating it when trying to solve the "mysteries." Even though the teacher educator witnessed students occasionally wrestling with ambiguities, he questioned the worth of the assignment: Was the envisioned critical questioning and inquiry based project too complex for grade seven art students? Or were students less successful because they lacked engagement with and access to diverse and authentic Native voices?

Student Podcasts Reify Dominant Discourse

Student scripts revealed generally strong reification of dominant discourse. They were uncomfortable "not knowing" and the idea of historic incommensurabilty was unexpressed in student podcasts. Two of the seven student groups specifically used the term "our museum"

and the group quoted below identified as "we the people of the museum." This was unintentionally reinforced during the pottery unit's makeover, as students were framed as museum 'insiders' challenged to question the exhibition of the Mimbres objects. One of the most complete and coherent student scripts was interesting in its wrestling with critical questions:

> Who do the pots really belong to? NAGPRA protects all Native American pots in burial sites, so the real question is do we the people of the museum own it or do Native Americans of today own them?... The Mimbres people have disappeared which leaves another question. Where did they go? We all know where the civilization was in New Mexico. Why did they leave? Did they join a different tribe, or did they move into Mexico? All these questions have lead to our first and most important one: Whom do the pots really belong to in the modern world?

These students have engaged with the question of ownership. But their identity remains rooted in the White institution of the museum, the dominant legal system, and the rational scholarship of the school. The students further engaged in a distinct "we" and "them" alignment in the question they pose and in their proposed rational solution to "prove" ancestral claims:

> One way to answer this question is to do DNA testing on the remains from the graves and modern tribes. This would tell us if they are related in any way and may prove the only path. Otherwise this question will remain a mystery.

INSIGHTS AND NEW QUESTIONS

The Mimbres pottery—concurrently situated as works of art, ancient scientific artifacts, and sacred burial objects—provide a complex and resonant focus for art curriculum. Contact with the ancient material culture within the museum setting proved to deepen and engage students in critical questioning. Making visible the potentially contentious cultural issues of race, power, and injustice that surround the collection, display, and study of Indigenous material culture like the Mimbres ceramics, however, left our teacher collaborator feeling uneasy. As the emphasis of her teaching shifted from lecture and mimetic art production to a more student-centered approach that invited critical interpretation of Mimbres objects, the teacher's discomfort over blurring the boundaries of art learning was palpable: "I want it to still be art, not just become social studies." Focusing learning activities on non-Western material culture and reflecting on challenging questions of ownership and power that surround Indigenous objects represents a philosophical shift in how one teaches and also expands the potential content of the discipline (Freedman, 2003). In our colleague's suburban middle school, questioning the official discourse of art education posed risks. "Transform[ing] the student from a productive young artist into an analytic spectator" (Eisner, 2001, p. 8) can play poorly in schools where kids see art class as an escape from courses that use more traditional means to boost academic acumen.

Through careful and critical analysis of the enactment of the Mimbres unit, momentary evidence of students' shifting perspectives and enacting new relations to power was found. But too often this was within overwhelming and often invisible forces to reify existing and dominant Western and White discourses. Under-examined racial issues and assumptions dominate this classroom and the museum. What are the limitations of these White institutions and of White teachers and students to critically voice diverse cultural experiences? What is the role of the art museum in creating classroom materials that engage critical questions? What is the potential of art practice to address such areas of complexity without resorting to cultural mimicry? As our collaboration continues and grows, how will the inclusion of Native voices impact this work? Can contemporary American Indians, those with no direct ancestral links to the ancient Mimbres, afford more-powerful contrasting perspectives to dominant discourses? What new complications and opportunities will this diversity of resources bring to the art room and to the understanding of the Mimbres objects? Our critical and collaborative investigation with the middle school art teacher has left us humbled, curious, and motivated to continue reimagining possibilities for the art room.

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Using the Concepts of Material Culture Studies in the Art Classroom

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Objects. We buy them, sell them, collect them, give them, and use them. They are all around us. They hold our memories. They tell us about ourselves; they inform us about others. They can be considered trash or treasure.

This is a chapter about objects, learning, and creative process. It examines the role objects and the field of material culture studies can play in art education to shape artmaking and teach the critical, symbolic, and creative thinking skills essential to creative invention. Described here are five art projects and one curriculum development strategy, all of which bring art practice and material culture studies together. These integrated activities involve investigating the lives and meanings of objects as springboards for students' exploration and analysis of themselves and their world (critical or analytical thinking); the making of connections and meaning (symbolic or associative thinking), and the development of new imagery, ideas, and insights (creative or imaginative thinking).

MATERIAL CULTURE AND MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES

Material culture is a term used to describe human-made objects or **artifacts**. *Material culture studies* is a phrase employed to delineate the examination of artifacts; it is an approach to historical and anthropological research into human life that takes its clues from things people make. The central premise of material culture studies is that objects, as artifacts, have meaning and convey meaning (Schlereth, 1985). Objects are, therefore, both physical manifestations of human minds and culture, and also signs from a culture that can be deciphered. This makes them particularly rich sources for investigating human belief systems and actions. Indeed, scholars in material culture studies believe that objects provide us with evidence of human life and cultures that surpasses what we can glean from written texts alone. This is the case because objects are primary sources; unlike texts, they come to us without the interpretive filter of words. They are also three-dimensional; they inhabit space and have a physical presence. Furthermore, objects engender **affective** understanding; they touch our senses and tap into our emotions (Schlereth, 1985). This last trait enables us to encounter other cultures and other times in a lively, experiential, **non-rational** way (Prown, 2001). For these reasons, scholars in fields such as anthropology and archeology study both past and present cultures by examining objects from these cultures.

Although these ideas within the field of material culture studies have been applied mostly to social and cultural investigations of non-art objects, they have also been used to study art. For example, art history scholars frequently take cultural and historical contexts into account in their analyses or understandings of works of art as cultural artifacts (Prown, 2001).

ART EDUCATION MEETS MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES

How might material culture studies pertain to the intersection of art exploration and creative practice that constitutes art education? Material culture studies and art can come together in the classroom in a number of ways. One approach might involve investigating an artifact or artwork to reveal its origins, meanings, and cultural context. This common art class application can heighten awareness of objects and artworks as cultural artifacts and simultaneously hone students' perceptual and analytical skills. Another way to merge art and the investigation of material culture is to use the principles and methods of material culture studies to initiate the creation of artworks. This approach calls for applying information and ideas associatively and imaginatively to create new forms that embody and convey these ideas.

Material culture studies and art practice also connect on an operational level, which makes their integration particularly meaningful and educative. Today, art practice is increasingly understood as a form of inquiry (Marshall, 2007; Sullivan, 2005). For this reason, material culture studies and art practice can be seen as parallel forms of cultural research; both offer ways of discovering and constructing knowledge. Additionally, material culture studies and art practice can employ similar inquiry methods, such as observing, questioning, analyzing, interpreting, and making hypotheses. In the study of material culture, these strategies are used to extract and develop information; in art practice, they help construct knowledge and also inform and jumpstart creative processes.

MODELS OF MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES/ART INTEGRATION

The following sections offer examples of lessons that were inspired by and engage with material culture studies. Each lesson was utilized in preservice art education classes at San Francisco State University. Each lesson engages material culture in its own way. Lesson one addresses possessions as extensions of the self. Lesson two explores how objects have life histories. Lesson three employs the metaphorical potential of objects. In lessons four and five, the notion of objects as cultural artifacts is used creatively in constructing a fictional culture. Finally, the curriculum development activity employs objects as sources for lesson ideas.

Lesson One: Homage to an "Ancestor"

The first lesson explores the lives and personalities of real people and links them to objects. In it, students create portraits of individuals who have influenced them in their artistic or intellectual growth—their inspirational "ancestors." These portraits take the form of busts augmented with objects that are associated with the persons depicted.

Although students think critically in analyzing their ancestors and creatively in portraying them, symbolic thinking is the primary focus of the lesson. Symbolic thinking takes place when students transform the objects associated with their ancestors into symbols that represent them. Because construction of the busts can be challenging for upper-elementary students, this lesson is most appropriate for students in middle and high school.

Students begin their work by researching the life and times of their ancestors, paying close attention to their ancestors' creative or scholarly practices, personal activities, possessions, and life stories. After conducting their research, students construct life-sized busts of their ancestors—whose features can either be inspired by photographs or other visual descriptions of these individuals or be imagined and created by the student—using balloons, tag board, and papier-mâché. Students then choose five to ten objects from their ancestors' lives they think best represent them. They make these objects in clay and place them on or around the busts. The expansion of the portrait through symbolic objects links the lesson to material culture studies, in particular to Belk's (1988) notion that an individual's possessions are extensions of himself

FIGURE 1. Mika Phinney (2008). *Maya Lin.* Papier-mâché, mixed media, and ceramic clay. *Courtesy of the artist.*

or herself. To Belk, a person's possessions reveal much about their owner. In this portrait, the objects extend the depictive range of the portrait and contribute to the meaning of it.

The example shown in Figure 1 is a portrait bust of contemporary artist Maya Lin, adorned with her drafting tools and a book of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Perched on her head is The Civil Rights Memorial, Lin's public artwork that honors King, and flowing from this "hat" are paper waterfalls lined with King's momentous words. The objects displayed are especially evocative of Maya Lin and her métier. The drafting tools represent the methods through which Lin's work is realized. The book signifies her research, indicating how crucial research is to the meaning and form her artworks take. The representation of the artwork itself points to Lin's artistic accomplishments.

Lesson Two: Packaging an Artifact

In the second lesson, students explore and display a personal artifact. Students begin by selecting objects significant to them. Students then draw their artifacts, hold a mock interview with them, and write imagined biographies of the objects. From there, students brainstorm and create cluster maps of ideas, places, people, and events associated with their artifacts. Finally, they make packaging for their artifacts out of cardboard or tag board. The packaging itself can take any number of forms and can be covered with relevant texts and images; as a whole, it should reflect the shape and size of the object and incorporate information each student has gathered about their artifact.

Since this lesson requires some manual dexterity and in-depth analysis on the part of the students, it is most effective in upper-middle and high school environments. The lesson incorporates three types of thinking: critical thinking in examining the object, symbolic thinking in developing symbolic imagery for the packaging, and creative thinking in personifying the artifact and creating a biography. Additionally, creative problem-solving is an important part of the process of designing and constructing the package.

This lesson connects to material culture studies in that it is fundamentally about studying artifacts and unearthing their meanings. Specifically, the lesson draws on the idea that objects have social lives (Appadurai, 1986) or biographies (Kopytoff, 1986) which, like careers, evolve over time through a series of exchanges from one person to another. The notion of biography, in particular, endows an object with a life of its own. Kopytoff believes that personification of objects enriches research in material culture studies and argues that, "in doing a biography of a thing, we should ask questions similar to those one asks of people" (p. 66). In this lesson, students do just that. By interviewing the artifacts as if they were human, the information gathered is more imaginative, personal, playful, and vital than it otherwise might be.

Presented in Figure 2 is the prototype for this lesson. It displays a biography of and packaging for a pair of small plastic feet that have been tattooed or mapped with acupuncture points. The artist (the author) purchased the feet in a Shanghai market. The biography is a whimsical account of the feet's manufacture in China, their identity as medical paraphernalia, their life in a box of castaway stuff, their eventual discovery and journey to California, and their new life as curios and dust collectors.

Lesson Three: Portrait of Me as an Object

Lesson three is an investigation of the self in which students explore their identities through "artifactual metaphors" (Schlereth, 1985). Students begin by choosing objects they identify with. Students then draw the objects, brainstorm ideas, and create cluster maps around the drawings, which note all the things, people, places, and ideas students associate with their objects. From there, students draw themselves as their objects. They can use any number of materials, such as paint, pens, pencils, or chalk pastels. If desired, educators can extend the lesson to include other studio activities, such as having students make comic strips that tell a

FIGURE 2. Julia Marshall (2009). *Little Feet Box and Biography.* Paper collage and poster board. *Courtesy of the artist.*

story about themselves as the object. This is a lesson in which one entity, a person, is associated or described in terms of another entity, an object; thus it is an exercise in metaphorical or symbolic thinking. Although metaphor is a complex concept, it can be made accessible to young students by simplifying the ideas, giving clear examples and using age-appropriate language. This lesson, with its concrete steps and focus on one source of metaphorical imagery (objects), is a direct way to introduce metaphor to students from upper-elementary to middle and high school.

The most immediately apparent connection to material culture studies lies in the lesson's focus on objects. However, the use of metaphor is also a connection to the investigation of objects, as the metaphorical nature of objects is a principal concept utilized in the meaningful study of material culture (Prown, 2001; Schlereth, 1985; Tilley, 2002). For Tilley, artifacts are metaphors in solid form and interpreting them as embodiments for cultural characteristics and dynamics is a particularly effective method for probing a culture. For scholars like Schlereth (1985), the metaphorical meaning of an object lies in the function of that object. Moreover, some object-based theorists argue that the style or form in which the object is made (Prown, 2001) and the substance of which it is made (Friedel, 1993) add to an object's metaphorical meaning. In this lesson, exploring all three—the function, style/form, and substance—of a chosen object provides a fuller understanding of the object, its meaning, and its qualities. Furthermore, this three-pronged analysis offers a generative metaphor through which students can develop their identities as artists.

Tilley (2002) celebrates the capacity of metaphors to create meaning. He argues that when artifacts are construed as metaphors for a culture, they enable us to understand that culture in more profound, experiential, and poetic ways. Interpreting objects as metaphors can also help to unearth hidden information about a culture. Metaphor performs these functions in this lesson as well. The metaphorical image engages the viewer with the subject of the portrait and also sheds light on the character of that subject. Because this is a self-portrait,

the metaphor leads the artist to new understandings of herself. How does this work? In associating herself with an object, the student artist explores the qualities and characteristics of that object and applies them to herself. This may reveal aspects of her personality she had not realized before.

The metaphorical object shown in Figures 3 and 4 is a light bulb, a symbol of ideas and creativity. This is a particularly apt portrayal of an enthusiastic young artist with bright ideas, a radiant personality, and a megawatt smile.

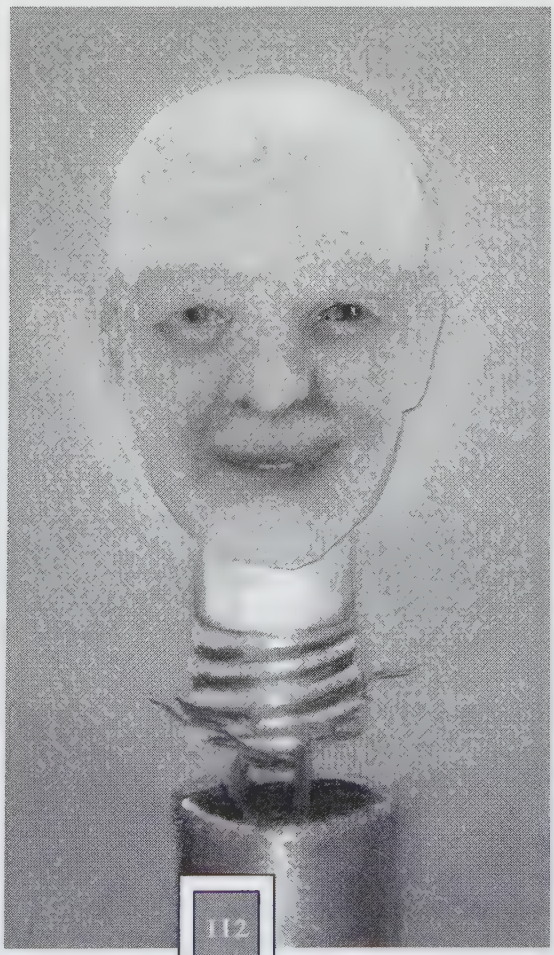
Lessons Four and Five: Artifacts and Culture Kits

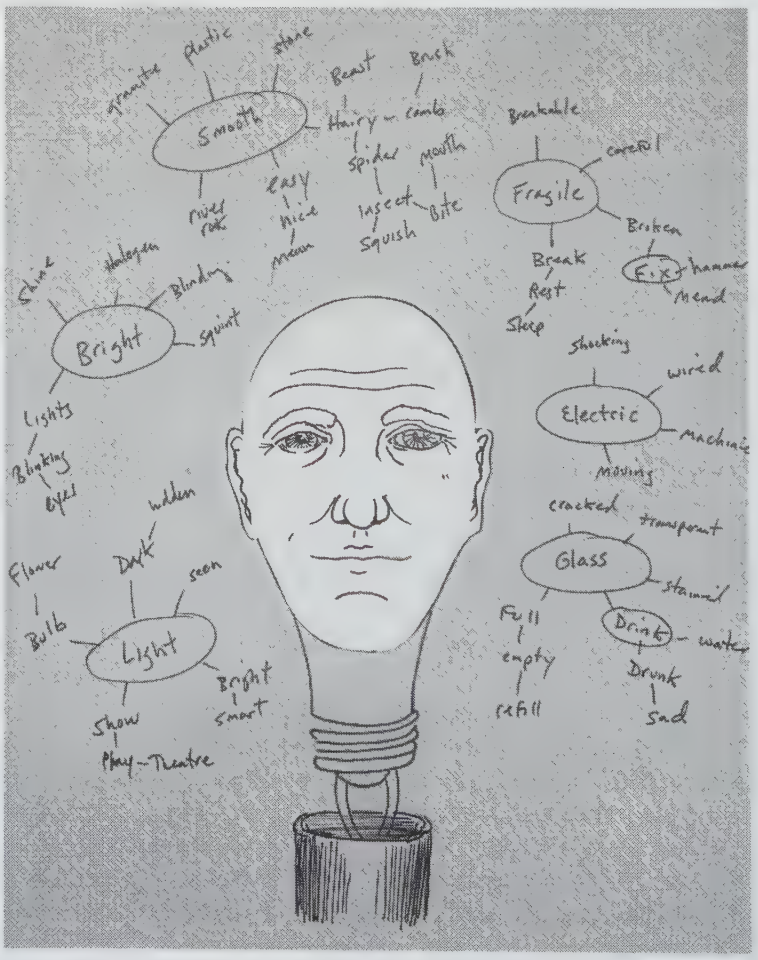
In lessons four and five, students make kits of fictional worlds. These two lessons are culminating activities for an extensive project that integrates geology, geography, and social studies, and which includes the investigation of material culture. In this project, each student creates an imaginary physical site and a civilization that inhabits it. The project has five steps: (1) making an island landscape; (2) developing and laying out a civilization by mapping it onto the island; (3) writing an ethnography of the civilization; (4) creating artifacts that represent significant aspects of the civilization; and (5) constructing kit boxes to house and display the artifacts.

In lesson four, the artifact lesson, students brainstorm the kinds of artifacts (tools, buildings, crafts, art, money, religious icons, etc.) that would be indicative of their newly created cultures and would best reflect the governments, languages, commerce, social systems, transportation, religions, and levels of technology to be found in them. Students then construct these artifacts in miniature out of clay and miscellaneous materials. In lesson five, the kit

FIGURE 3 (LEFT). David Silverman (2007). *Self Portrait as a Light Bulb.* Pastel Chalk. *Courtesy of the artist.*

FIGURE 4 (RIGHT). David Silverman (2007). *Map of Associations: Light Bulb Self Portrait.* Pen. *Courtesy of the artist.*





box lesson, students create boxes for their artifacts that further illustrate and elaborate on their civilizations.

Both these lessons engage with kinds of information valued by the field of material culture studies; for instance, they embrace the fundamental notion that artifacts embody and convey social and cultural ideas, values, and practices. Three kinds of thinking—critical, symbolic, and creative—are intertwined here: creative thinking in the creation of an imaginary world, critical thinking in the analysis of the culture, and symbolic thinking in the development of emblematic artifacts to represent and embody that world. The progression of the processes of thinking entailed by this project is significant in that it reverses the sequence evidenced elsewhere. The project begins with creative thinking and then utilizes critical and symbolic thinking to flesh out and embellish the original imaginative concept. This is a reversal of the usual sequence; with creative thinking coming first, it acts as a springboard for critical and symbolic thinking.

The example in Figures 5 and 6 is an arrangement of art and artifacts from an imaginary place called "Artica"—a happy, productive, and creative colony of artists. Included here are products related to all steps of the project: the island; the architecture; many artifacts such as tools, money, and souvenirs; a book on these objects; and the kit box itself. Also shown is a page from the book that includes a photograph and description of a snow globe lens. This is a particularly fitting artifact from Artica because it is a prism that creates a joyful vision of the world, filtered through a souvenir.

Curriculum Brainstorm

Many scholars in art education today contend that art curriculum should be based on concepts and issues from everyday life (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; Freedman, 2003; Taylor, Carpenter, Ballengee-Morris, & Sessions, 2006; The Ohio State TETAC Mentors, 2002). Designing such curriculum begins with identifying the concepts or issues to be addressed. Newspapers and magazines are good sources for this kind of content. From our knowledge about the meanings embodied in material culture, we know that objects can yield similar ideas.

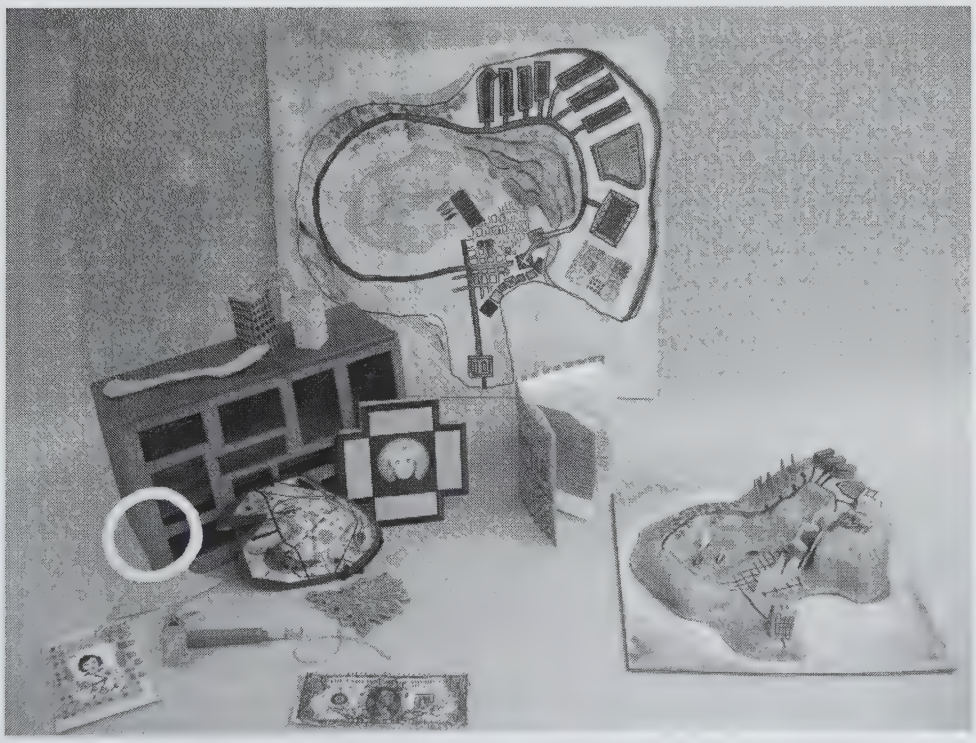


FIGURE 5. Taryn McCabe (2008). *Artica Kit.* Mixed media. *Courtesy of the artist.*

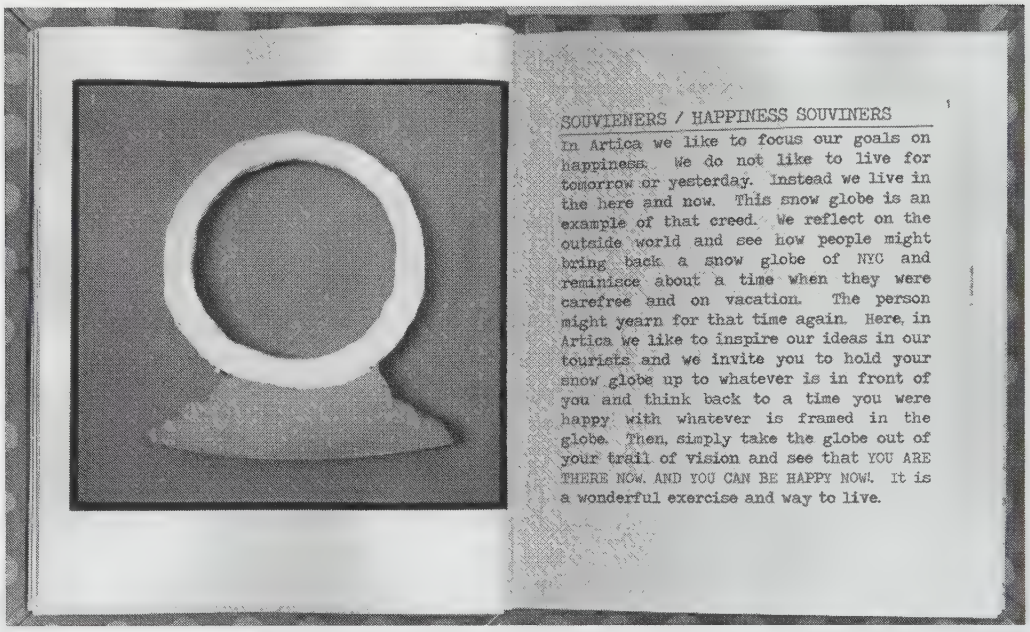

SOUVIENERS / HAPPINESS SOUVINERS
In Artica we like to focus our goals on happiness. We do not like to live for tomorrow or yesterday. Instead we live in the here and now. This snow globe is an example of that creed. We reflect on the outside world and see how people might bring back a snow globe of NYC and reminisce about a time when they were carefree and on vacation. The person might yearn for that time again. Here, in Artica we like to inspire our ideas in our tourists and we invite you to hold your snow globe up to whatever is in front of you and think back to a time you were happy with whatever is framed in the globe. Then, simply take the globe out of your trail of vision and see that YOU ARE THERE NOW. AND YOU CAN BE HAPPY NOW! It is a wonderful exercise and way to live.

FIGURE 6. Taryn McCabe (2008). Pages from *Facts and Pictures from Artica.* Book with photographs and descriptions. *Courtesy of the artist.*

I use the following activity in my preservice course to tap into the extraordinary possibilities of material culture (see Figures 7 and 8). To begin, the class divides into groups of three or four students. Each group chooses one object and "mines" it for the ideas and issues embedded in it. This involves extensive brainstorming and cluster mapping of multiple associations, themes, and concepts. From there, each group generates a number of project or lesson ideas based on one or two concepts/themes that arise in their investigation of the object. They then map out the sequence the lessons will take.

This activity, I believe, is an imaginative use of a central tenet held by many who study material culture, which yields particularly rich results. When we unearth concepts from objects, as opposed to starting directly from a preconceived idea, we access ideas we may not have anticipated. These ideas take our thinking and our curriculum in new directions.

The key to this inventiveness lies in the nature of the chosen objects. It is critical, therefore, to choose objects that work: human-made objects that are recognizable and evocative, and have the potential for students to unpack multiple layers of meaning. I like to choose artifacts from popular culture such as tools, candies, snacks, toys, souvenirs, knick-knacks, and manufactured models of natural things. These objects are often packaged and their packages carry meanings, too. Moreover, these objects can originate in many places and their culture of origin is often apparent. I attempt to utilize a variety of objects that evoke different concepts, and I always scrutinize objects myself for possible deeper levels of meaning before presenting them to students.

CONCLUSION: LESSONS FROM MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES AND ART ABOUT CREATIVITY AND INQUIRY

We often find the investigation of material culture carried out in the social studies classroom, where it channels the study of culture and history through artifacts. When we bring ideas and activities of material culture studies into the art classroom, they take on another role: they provide a focus and conceptual framework for creative art experiences. With its focus on the lived world and its use of analytical and metaphorical methods, material culture studies is a field especially suited for this form of educational engagement.

The intersection of material culture studies and art practice evidences three vital clues to understanding the nature of creativity. First, creative invention often begins not with

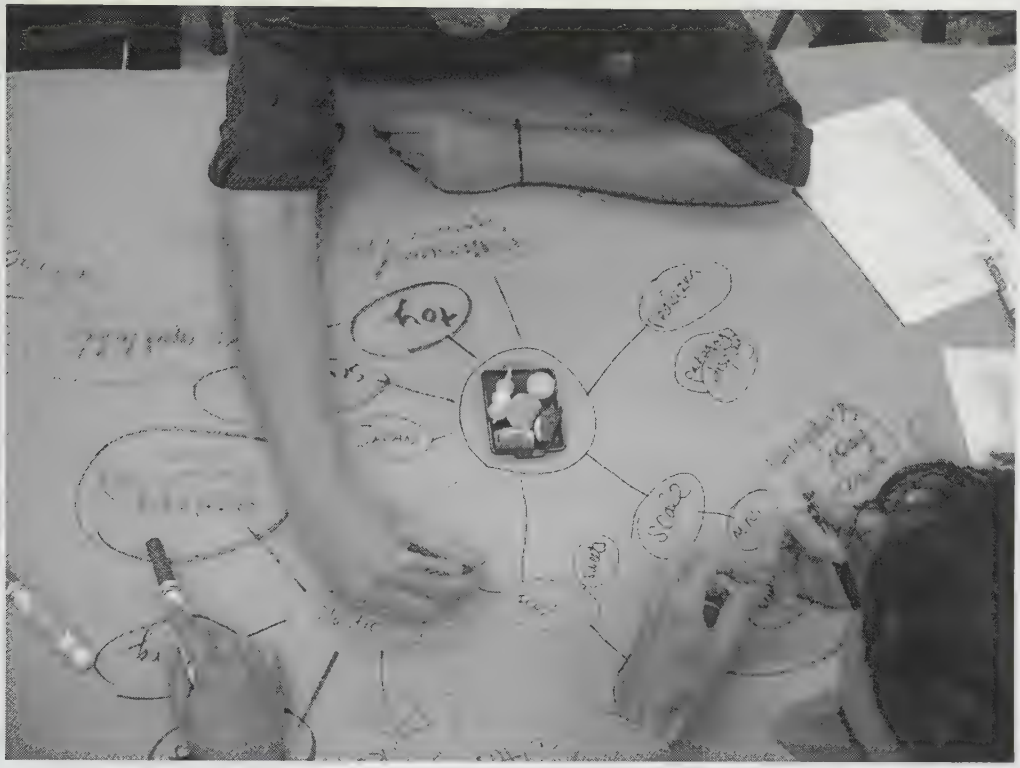


FIGURE 7 (LEFT). Brainstorming lesson ideas in the Curriculum Development Activity. *Photograph by the author.*

FIGURE 8 (BELOW). Selected objects from the Curriculum Development Activity. *Photograph by the author.*

personal introspection and abstract flights of fantasy, but instead with inquiry into the outside world. In lessons that combine art and the study of material culture, the role of inquiry is emphasized; creative process is jumpstarted through looking around, noticing things, examining them, picking them apart, and extracting ideas.

Second, creativity involves thinking that is rational and logical, as well as thinking that is associative and imaginative. As we have seen, the integration of material culture studies and art engages students in all three types of thinking—critical, symbolic, and creative.

Third, associative thought and imaginative thought are both grounded in the world of real things and in the rational and/or experiential ways in which we know them. In art lessons that draw from material culture studies, seeing the symbolic potential of things and making imaginative leaps to new ideas and forms are directly tied to the analytical study of concrete material objects. All three of these insights into the nature of creativity are important for teachers and students alike to understand, as they help to demystify creativity and make imaginative thought and creative inquiry more accessible, doable, and easier to facilitate in the classroom. For these reasons and for the many opportunities for artmaking it provides, the integration of material culture studies and art is worth exploring in the art classroom.

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Thinking Through Sticker Art: Material Culture Inquiry in Art Education

■ KATHLEEN KEYS

This chapter presents several approaches for developing inquiry into sticker art within material culture and art education. Thinking through material culture, Knappett (2005) recommends "an integrated and theoretical framework using insights derived from diverse fields" (p. 110). This inquiry framework inspired by semiotics, Marxism, artistic expression, and identity politics provides diverse entry points for exploration leading to suggested educational activities relevant for secondary or adult students.

Part of post-graffiti, neo-graffiti, or street art, 'paper grafitti art' (Walde, 2007) or stickering evolved as "a new generation of writers,[1] artists, and designers got smart and switched to stickers" (Dorrian, Farrelly & Reccia, 2002, p. 4), allowing a shift from mainly typographic to iconographic design. As stickering is illegal, most artists remain anonymous except within the subculture. Sticker artists are generally between 20 and 35 years old (Walde, 2007; Hundertmark, 2006), "have a far greater sense of responsibility than teenagers, and are reluctant to run the risks associated with [traditional] graffiti" (Walde, 2007, p. 80).

Clandestinely installed on both public and private property sticker art "appears on city surfaces, garbage receptacles [see Figure 1], parking meters, traffic signs [see Figure 2], and newspaper boxes [see Figure 3].... [It] includes use of pre-made mailing labels, name tags, appropriated stickers, purchased pre-made stickers, and/or multiples of original designs" (Keys, 2008, p. 98), and consists of individual or overlapping icons, logos, urban characters, and free forms (Manco, 2004). Those unfamiliar may visit the Sticker Nation, Flickr, or Sticker Traders websites[2] for fascinating introductions. Vast sticker art collections are readily accessible in black books,[3] magazines,[4] zines, and numerous four-color book publications.[5]

Known often in practice as sticker bombing,[6] sticker art has become a viral art form in the past two decades spreading into a global phenomenon. Viral art is explained as "self-replicating ideas that grow and spread around us, such as stickers, stencils, posters and pavement art... that are photographed, documented and placed on the World Wide Web where their popularity and notoriety increases ("Viral art," 2008, ¶ 1). Fueled further by lower travel costs, "globe-trotting" (Dorrian, et al., 2002) artists, and expanding Internet networks, it has exploded in popularity. Larger cities and metropolitan areas such as New York, London, Berlin, San Francisco, and Los Angeles host the largest sticker art activity, but it has reached smaller city venues and many non-urban locales (Keys, 2008).

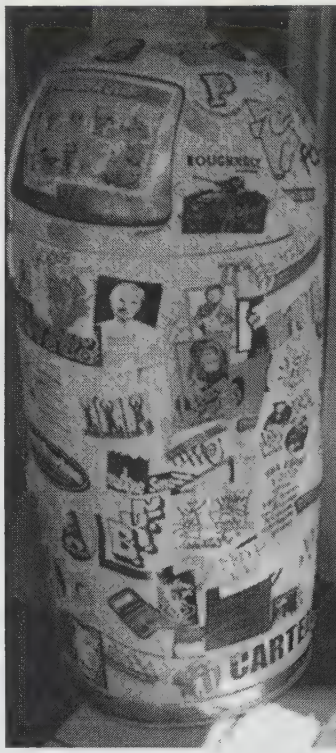

FIGURE 1. Garbage can, Haight Ashbury, San Francisco, 2007.

FIGURE 2. Stop signs at the Northshore, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2006.

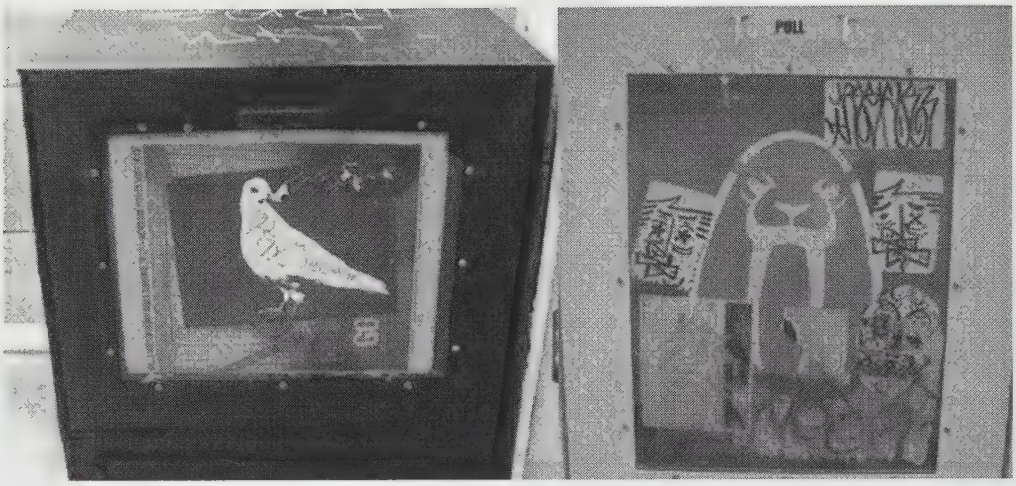

FIGURE 3. Newspaper boxes, Lower Haight, San Francisco, 2005.

TROUBLING LESSONS

While taking illegal art forms into teaching environments may be problematic, educators can clearly articulate this inquiry is not advocacy or an endorsement of the defacement of public or private property, and ensure understanding about the consequences and penalties for such activity. It is rather an examination of a vivid and innovative material cultural form already in existence. Kun (2001) recommends considering age appropriateness, seeking approval of education authorities, and sincerely considering the community and its interests prior to initiating study of non-sanctioned art.

STICKERS AS MATERIAL CULTURE & ART EDUCATION

Despite an estimated sticker lifespan of only one month, sticker art presents a complex subject for material culture studies and likewise compelling contemporary content for art education. Kader (2003) explains material culture as inclusive of the study of all "things," and as Bolin and Blandy (2003) remind us, it includes all human-mediated expressions. Thus material culture as "a descriptor of any and all human constructed or human mediated objects, forms, or expressions, manifested consciously or unconsciously through culturally acquired behaviors" (p. 249) certainly includes sticker art. Offering evidence of multisensory experiences, stickering qualifies as material culture, rather than just visual culture (Bolin & Blandy, 2003; Kader, 2003), as the performative and action-oriented assembly, installation, surveying, collecting and abatement engages a range of senses.

The functions of stickers, like other forms of material culture, "are multiple and intertwined" (Kingery, as quoted by Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p. 251). As with other underestimated and seemingly ordinary materials, stickers function as "rich repositories of personal and cultural memory" (George & Salvatori, 2008, p. 250). As art and images in general, they inspire recollection, and simultaneously, "their configuration, structure, and form are determined by memories and histories" (Chanda, 2004, p. 91).

Including sticker art as material culture content in art education broadens notions of art and culture. Doing so helps to build skills that "enable us to read carefully and insightfully the cultural expressions that permeate our world" (Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p. 251), and understand "current graffiti art is reflective of the world around it" (Manco, 2004, p. 1). Students engaged in these readings will find this sign system loaded with instant and allusive indicators representing diverse subcultures. Exemplifying how material forms and objects "embody and perpetuate ideas about cultures, regions, religions, nations, and individual and collective identities" (Burkhart, 2006, p. 33), students learn about sticker makers and themselves.

Kun (2001) and Whitehead (2004) discuss how graffiti is likely familiar to many young people and is part of their everyday environment. Keys (2008) argues for the inclusion of

sticker art in formal art education curricula, asking, "What happens if we do not examine ultra contemporary visual [and material] culture such as sticker art in our art classrooms? What then, might we (not) be teaching about art?" (p. 101). Foregoing sticker art excludes from students a meaningful, compelling, global art form extremely relevant to the lives of learners today.

Classifying material culture such as stickering as simply ephemera, "diverts attention from their significant cultural and pedagogical value" (George & Salvatori, 2008, p. 250). Its study "provides the opportunity to discuss the social roles that art can play and the legal issues it can raise about the rights and responsibilities of the artist in a society where private property is important," and can be "a springboard for the examination of personal identity, commercial design, social history, and community conflict" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 26).

Searching for Meaning—Reading Sticker Art

A polysemous residue, stickers and their eroding and evolving imagery (see Figure 4) serve as decoration, adornment, an alteration of space, as pictorial writing on the city, and as collective urban collage (Keys, 2008). Stickers may be "read as social and political geography" (Tonkiss, 2005, p. 140), as critique or commentary, or as a subversion of commercial advertising or state or civic authority. As a symbol of individuality, applying a sticker in public fulfills a "basic urge to leave a trace on the world" (Manco, 2004, p. 43). Adhesive artist Swoon[7] describes this artistic hyperactivity as a "community of actions" (Manco, 2004, p. 110), and as "a force of nature that helps create the textures and the tides of the city. It defines neighborhoods... reflecting the basic desire to help create the city we live in" (p. 114).

Stickers provide a "visual intermission, a (pleasurable) break from all the visual garbage" (Dorrian et al., 2002, p. 9). As images and/or text, they are generally understood "as part of a widely accessible pictorial language" (Walde, 2007, p. 138) taking on multiple functions. They "can promote, decorate, temporarily mend things, say something, say nothing, be a warning, directions, praise of good behavior, or achievement, [or be] a means of identity" (Studio Rarekwai, 2008, p. 4).

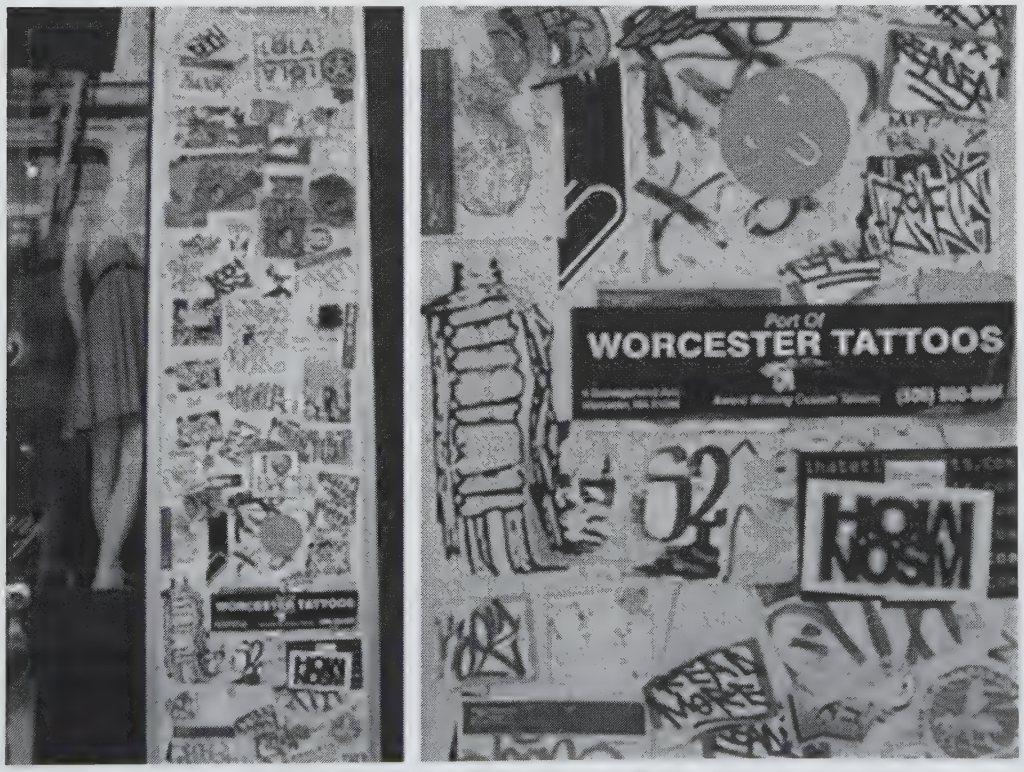

FIGURE 4. Collage outside clothing store (left) and detail (right), New York City, 2007.

The following information provides a variety of approaches and considerations art educators may employ to engage learners in investigations of sticker art.

Sticker Hunters: Documenting Sticker Art

After locating street art areas, facilitate a student walking tour to investigate and document sticker art activity. Provide digital cameras/recorders and sketchbooks for documenting single stickers, multiples, groupings, and emerging collages.

Ask students to:

- Find similarities and differences in how stickers look and are made;
- Take note about how the sticker is or is not well-integrated into its surroundings;
- Organize and prepare collected documentation information after the fieldtrip; and
- Classify stickers as icons, logos, characters, free forms, or other categories and begin "conducting research on local interpretations of images" (Keys, 2008, p. 99).

SEMIOTIC AND DEMOCRATIC PLAYGROUNDS

Chanda (2004) and Smith-Shank (2004) suggest using semiotics and semiotic pedagogy (Smith-Shank, 1995) in art education. Based on the sign, generally defined as "anything that can be used to represent or stand for something else... [t]he goal of semiotics is to discover how meaning is conveyed and generated by texts... objects, artifacts, and material culture in general" (Berger, 1992, p. 17). "By personalizing, customizing and subvertising, [see Figure 5] artists are creating their own sign language" (Manco, 2004, p. 11). Considering stickers as signs and discovering how they convey and generate meaning by analyzing what they represent, stand for, and signify, students will find "some signs have self-evident meanings but others have more codified intentions" (Manco, 2004, p. 8).

Sticker as Sign of Semiotic Self

Smith-Shank (2004) discusses the search for semiotic self, composed of outward signs and conceptual signifiers that represent our identity to ourselves and others:

- Discuss how found stickers operate as signs of the artists' semiotic selves.
- Next, facilitate student creation of individual signs of semiotic self.
- Start with initial designs and evolve to complete works with substantive meaning.
- Apply final works to pre-made stickers, or on to paper covered by contact paper, leaving margins for easy installation.
- Discuss options for legally displaying these works in the classroom or school such as on a bulletin board, approved cabinet, or other sanctioned area.
- Decide whether works will be exhibited individually, using sticker bombing techniques, or in a group perhaps representing an alternative class portrait of semiotic selves.
- Consider small editions or multiples for exchange and other appropriate uses.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Disconnected from commercial values or tastes, sticker art is one of today's most authentic and fertile art forms (Manco, 2004), and standards of serious artistic practice are evident. Artists filter, appropriate and synthesize countless images "using familiar design language of advertising, desktop publishing, websites, video games, and popular culture" (Manco, 2004, p. 17), and are "challenged with creating artistic and aesthetically pleasing works in the public environment" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 29). While getting your work up, and attaining fame and notoriety within the stickering community, is important, "an inspiring concept is what counts in this scene if you want to earn respect" (Walde, 2007, p. 63). For artists, the fast evolution works as a driving and competitive force to keep work fresh, and innovation motivates them to always be thinking about "what hasn't been done before?" (Manco, 2004, p. 43).

Critiquing Artistic Practice

Critique found or personal sticker art against the aforementioned standards.

- How or why is the sticker art concept inspiring and/or innovative?
- How are elements of art or principles of design employed?
- What makes it appealing or interesting?
- If applicable, how well is the sticker integrated with its environment?

ART OR VANDALISM

Despite reactions of authority figures to street art, "writers are not vandalizing, they are advertising" (Walmesley, 2004, p. 195) their presence and individuality in a "culture where [it] is distrusted, even discouraged" (p. 198). Sontag (2001) states, graffiti "acts as an assertion of disrespect, yes, but most of all simply an assertion: the powerless saying I'm here too" (p. 149). Thus, the crime is not the actual writing of graffiti or placement of stickers, "the crime is reacting against those who have power over you, those who make the rules. The crime is insubordination" (Walmesley, 2004, p. 202).

Debate: Art or Vandalism

- Guide students in gathering multiple viewpoints on sticker art. Resources include published artist interviews, blogs, critical writing, exhibition reviews, passages from documentary books, and YouTube clips.
- Organize interviews with street artists, city officials, or abatement workers utilizing student questions.
- Divide students into teams and ask them to synthesize collected information and prepare debate statements. Invite judges and an audience to the debate.
- In conclusion, discuss whether sticker art is art and vandalism simultaneously?
- Adaptations might involve smaller debate groups and/or persuasive writing exercises.

FIGURE 5. Paper towel dispenser, Haight Ashbury, San Francisco, 2007.

REBEL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

People try on and reject different identities as an ongoing construction of their identity and a city's "marginal spaces provide sites for declaring refractory identities" (Tonkiss, 2005, p. 142). Combining these sites with stickering, a methodology associated with protest and rebellion functioning as a way to "taunt and/or stimulate the public" (Fairey, 2006, p. 16) takes on the form of an identity politics (Sennett, 1990). Thus, graffiti and other "forms of urban representation... have a role in shaping urban identities and expectations" (Tonkiss, 2005, p. 92). Likewise, sticker artmaking, distribution, and getting up is a large part of identity construction for its artists. It says, I have something to say and want to be seen, but I am not going to follow societal norms and regulations to do it. I am exercising my right to "free" yet subversive expression.

Fueling street art, authorities unwittingly assign "folk devil" (Walmesley, 2004) status to artists, making their actions seem as an "almost heroic representation for others of successful rebellion" (p. 206) worth replication. Seeing it as a natural reaction in a world with too many rules and regulations, where young people feel ignored or fenced in, Walmesley (2004) asks, "What is more rebellious and natural than making a mark, your mark, on authority's wall?" (p. 201).

Being a Rebel: What's the Appeal?
Discuss relative positives and negatives associated with "free thinking" and rebellion or protest. Stress that it includes standing up for your beliefs even when they are not popular, and provide historical examples about how rebellion and protest has brought about significant social change. Consider the following questions.

- How do some stickers signify rebellion or protest?
- What does it mean to rebel, or to be a rebel?
- What signs do we associate with signifying rebellion?
- What figures or images are associated with rebellion in real life or popular culture?[8]
- What is appealing about being associated with rebellion?
- Have you ever been attracted to the idea of rebelling? How so and why or why not?

CRITICAL READINGS: CONTESTING SPACE AND CREATING PLACE

Within sticker art, there is great potential for critiquing roles of consumerism, capitalist consumption, patriarchy, and authority of all kinds. As a response to these forces, artists such as Shepard Fairey (see Figure 6) regularly contest, reclaim, or re-create public space. In relation to Marxist perspectives, graffiti, like all subcultures, expresses "forbidden contexts (consciousness of class, consciousness of difference) in forbidden forms (transgressions of sartorial and behaviorial codes, lawbreaking, etc.)" (Hebdige, 1989, p. 91). Manifestations symbolically open up new views of the city, exasperating the rule makers and troubling the dominant and parent cultures (Walmesley, 2004). Even in simple sticker forms, graffiti offers "an assertion of something, a criticism of public reality" (Sontag, 2001, p. 148). As a critique of society, logos and symbols in the street carry vitality. They are "looked upon as public brands or anti-logos flying in the face of the nefarious empires of corporations" (Manco, 2004, p. 8):

FIGURE 6. Poster from Shepard Fairey's OBEY the Giant sticker campaign (started 1989), Hayes Valley, San Francisco, 2007.

> The people who truly deface our neighborhoods are the companies that scrawl their giant slogans across buildings and buses trying to make us feel inadequate unless we buy their stuff. They expect to be able to shout their message in your face from every available surface but you're never allowed to answer back. (Banksy, 2005, p. 8)

Answering in material culture, street art charts visual and material conversations of resistance. Writing on the city in this way changes the atmosphere. It remakes the city's material fabric as text (Tonkiss, 2005). Its action and appearance are not directly territorial, but do alter the surroundings and create a layer of newly articulated human presence and evidence of artistic interest (Manco, 2004).

WHEN OUTSIDERS GO INSIDE

Mentioned previously, an important aspect of sticker art is how stickers are effectively integrated into the street environment. As street artists such as Shepard Fairey[9] and Swoon[10] are embraced and their work exhibited by galleries and museums, the contextual and integrated street environment is removed, causing opinions about the art's vitality to waver.

When considering a move to the mainstream art world, "many street artists feel that the inherent freedom of street art is smothered in such a sterile environment" (Walde, 2007, p. 74). Others cite "the potential that the institution will overwhelm the work, which can be rendered instantly impotent" (Moleski, 1999, p. 50), making the work mere portraits of graffiti (Tonkiss, 2005). Tonkiss (2005) notes that although perhaps "pacified, graffiti art brings the street inside, but still connotes something vaguely outlaw and definitely urban" (p. 142).

Artist D*face[11] believes this sanctioning immediately commodifies an otherwise egalitarian and free art form, and now in the gallery "it is likely those same people that viewed it as vandalism would see it as art" (Hundertmark, 2006, p. 6). Knappett (2005) posits that putting graffiti in an art museum does not make it art, but "does nonetheless constitute part of an ongoing discourse as to the changing status of these kinds of objects" (p. 123).

Discussion Topic: When Outsiders Go Inside

Guide students in reviews of street art exhibited in museums or galleries and discuss the following.

- How does a change in venue from the street to a gallery or museum alter the meaning, function, or significance of sticker art?
- Do you think that placement of sticker art in a museum or gallery automatically makes it "art"? Why or why not?

ABATEMENT PRACTICES, PENALTIES, AND CONSEQUENCES

Despite millions of dollars spent on abatement and containment, street art remains. Walmesley (2004) contends it is "not a disease. It is not a flaw, a leaky pipe that can be fixed. Graffiti is not curable; it is forever and has since been forever" (p. 201). He suggests abatement practices exacerbate graffiti, continuing a never ending game of cat and mouse, but that "to accept graffiti is to accept vandalism and chaos, which in turn is to accept anarchy" (p. 204). Walde (2007) believes, "The authorities tend to penalize the [traditional] graffiti culture with a great deal more severity than the adhesive subset, even though the law generally views them with equal disdain" (p. 80). Stickers are perceived as more annoying than destructive, as weather and/or a good scraping likely removes them, but as visibility of stickering increases, so too will harsh penalties and consequences.

As part of meaningful instruction, educators are encouraged to discover and review local abatement practices, city codes, and violation policies with students. Reviewing high-profile examples such as Shepard Fairey's legal troubles[12] surrounding his non-sanctioned street art in Boston during his retrospective at the Institute of Contemporary Art will generate additional critical thinking about this contentious art form.

CONCLUSION

The presented multi-perspective framework suggests educational activities to lead students in relevant and compelling inquiry and discovery about others and themselves through the important art and material culture phenomenon of sticker art. As discussed, stickers as ordinary objects act as significant cultural and historical signifiers (George & Salvatori, 2008), offering a complex platform for questioning, conversation, and learning from our everyday world.

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ENDNOTES

1 Writer is a graffiti culture term for an artist practicing traditional aerosol graffiti based on typography and stylized lettering.

2 See www.stickernation.net, the first regular documentation of sticker culture and striving to be a definitive resource. For Flickr's library, see: www.flickr.com/photos/tags/stickerart/. For printing and trading information, see: www.stickertraders.com/

3 Similar to black books kept by graffiti writers, it holds or documents large collections of stickers. For examples see: peelmagazine.com/allsurface/thumbnails.php?album=5

4 PEEL Magazine, the first street-art magazine with a focus on stickers. See www.pe3l.com/, where eight issues are archived online.

5 Banksy, 2005; Le Bijoutier, 2008; Combs & Combs, 2008; Dorrian, Farrelly, & Reccia, 2002; Manco, 2002, 2004; Studio Rarekwai, 2008; Ullrich, A., Marx, M., & M. Muller, 2006; Walde, 2007.

6 Sticker bombing is slang for taking part in a large scale stickering effort with several copies of one sticker or placing several stickers in myriad public places.

7 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swoon_(artist)

8 Examples include James Dean; The Fonz; the Rebel Alliance of Freedom Fighters from *Star Wars*; and many artists and musicians, including specific songs or albums such as Billy Idol's *Rebel Yell*, Bob Marley and the Wailers' *Rebel Music*, and, Lenny Kravitz's *Rebel Rebel*.

9 Fairey, Williams, & Levine, 2008. Or access: http://obeygiant.com for a plethora of information. Or www.icaboston.org/about/pressreleases/shepard-fairey/ to read about the retrospective exhibition, Shepard Fairey: Supply & Demand at the Institute of Contemporary Art / Boston, February 6 – August 16, 2009.

10 See www.deitch.com/artists/sub.php?artistId=31 for Swoon's recent exhibitions, including her first solo show in New York at Deitch Gallery, July 7 – August 13, 2005.

11 See www.dface.co/uk/ Or www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D*Face. A solo exhibition was held at Jonathan Levine Gallery, New York, in September 2009.

12 Conduct an Internet search for "Shepard Fairey Boston Arrest" for newspaper articles covering this current art vs. vandalism legal debate.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Photos of street art by anonymous artists are courtesy of the author.

The Practice of Collecting: Private Worlds of Youth Culture and a Rationale for Art Curriculum

■ JEANNE NEMETH

Collecting is a common social activity that is part of daily life. It is embedded in our recognition of material culture and is a component of the postmodern world. Stewart (1993) argues that in our contemporary consumer society, collecting has replaced craft-making as a popular domestic pastime. The aesthetic of the handmade and single object is substituted for the bought or found readymade. Children are enthusiastic collectors of objects significant to their own histories and cultural identities. Belk (1995) notes that at age nine and ten, children had an average of three on-going collections. Most of these collected objects consisted of mass-produced items such as miniature figures and vehicles, stuffed toys, dolls, stickers, posters, and other purchased collectibles. These objects are often stored, displayed, and played with in a child's personal home space.

Most research studies about children's collections concentrate on what is collected and do not attempt to explain why one is attracted to certain objects or how they are selected, displayed, or used. Stewart (1993) describes collecting as a narrative activity, a practice in which objects are signs and require a narrator (collector or curator) to imbue them with personally significant meaning.

In this chapter I examine the interplay between children's personal space and their collected objects, exploring how objects represent personal and communal experiences in time and place. The results of a case study I conducted, which investigated the collecting practices of a middle school art teacher and her seventh-grade students, is used as a basis of discussion in the first section of this chapter. During this study, teacher and students were interviewed in order to find out why they collect certain objects, how they obtain objects for their collections, and what they do with their collections. The collections of and interviews with two students who demonstrated particular seriousness in their collecting practices are highlighted, along with a brief analysis of all students who participated.[1]

The study of collections, collectors, and collecting practices provides many critical and creative learning opportunities for students and teachers in art education. Suggestions and recommendations for a material culture-based curriculum connected with collecting studies are addressed in the second section of this chapter. This area of study offers cross-disciplinary curriculum ideas for learning about art practice, the mass arts, and material culture in a postmodern context.

COLLECTING VOICES: TWO CASE STUDIES

Twelve students out of 26 in a seventh-grade art class volunteered to talk about their objects of interest and personal collections. This group consisted of three boys and nine girls. The interviews loosely revolved around the following questioning categories: Objects of Importance, Definition of a Collection, Content in the Collection, Process Involved in Collecting, Use and Display of Collections, and Personal Connections to the Objects Collected. In addition, questions addressed the collecting process in relation to identity, family relationships, community activities, personal aesthetic considerations, and creative opportunities. These categories were derived in part from current research about collecting studies by Belk (1995, 1998); Pearce (1992, 1995, 1998); and Stewart (1993). Data gathered from interviews with the 12 middle school students, along with photographs taken by the students of their collections in their own personal spaces, revealed how the activity of collecting can serve a variety of purposes, some of which include narrative and social performance, identity formation, and artistic expression.

FIGURE 1. Pez candy containers: Madison's collection.

The following two case studies contain information about the collecting practices and interests of a female student and a male student in the study who stood out as examples of serious collectors. These case studies demonstrate how objects in a collection can (1) be used as markers of self-identity and personal histories, (2) reveal aesthetic judgment and production, and (3) perform narrative and social functions (Woodward, 2007). It is important to note how collections are given meaning by students through broader discourses of biography, which include self, family, and community.

Beanie Babies,® Stickers, and Pez Containers: Madison

Madison is a member of a collecting family. Her father displays his collection of Beatles record albums in a special shelving unit located next to the stereo, and her mother keeps her collection of family photos in an assortment of different books and in frames displayed

throughout the house. Madison is interested in collecting a number of things, but is especially serious about her collection of 63 Pez candy containers she began amassing last year. The pocket-size mechanical dispensers are prominent in popular culture and highly collectible, due to the fact that the Pez Candy Company has continually redesigned the dispenser to resemble different figures from popular media. Madison carefully staged her Pez collection in lines according to series and type and photographed the complete collection. She talked about some of the Pez containers in her collection:

> I love Pezes! The first Pez I got was from my friend Samantha; it's Dino from the Flintstones. I have the series of Pooh Bear and almost all of the super heroes. They have different colored stands. I have Wonder Woman, the Hulk, Spiderman, and the Wolverine. I also have Miss Piggy and a smiley face Pez. For Christmas my grandmother gave me one of the big ones of Charlie Brown that sings when you pull up his head.

Madison's Pez candy containers are stored in clear plastic cases with the exception of three special Star Wars® Pez characters, which are displayed in her room. She describes them: "I really like Star Wars. I have Ewok, Yoda, and Bubba and I have those hanging on my wall. I'm trying to find a Darth Vader Pez. I really want to get one of those."

She purchases many of her Pez containers with money she receives as birthday gifts. She buys Pez containers for about a dollar each at locations that include Kroger, Marsh, and McDonald's,® and on the Internet at Pez.com. A recent addition to her Pez collection was found at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant: "The last ones I bought were the Incredibles and I have the dad, the mom, the brother, and the little baby."

Before Madison collected Pez containers, she collected Beanie Babies and stickers, with the same drive and desire. She purchased most of her Beanie Babies at McDonald's, in Happy Meal boxes. In order to acquire an interesting assortment of objects for her collections, she selects characters or items she likes very much.

Little Models, Miniatures, Machine Parts, and World War II: Sam

A quiet and thoughtful student, Sam is an avid collector of a variety of objects. He shared many family stories connected with his prized collections. Sam collects small models and miniatures that he builds and paints. He learned about model-making from his father, who gave Sam some of the model cars he had when he was a boy. When he was 8, Sam began collecting sets of miniature models of World War II soldiers, purchased with his own money. He buys models at a small specialty store in town. Adding new models to his collection is a

FIGURE 2. Sam's photograph of his grandpa's army hats.

priority. He has a few friends that share his interest in World War II objects. The local Army/Navy Surplus store is a site where he and his friends find objects. He talked about his World War II collection:

> I'm really interested in WWII. I have this big shelf in my room and it has three shelves put together. I have a little place for WWII models and it's kind of a tribute to people. I have my grandfather's things from World War II that my dad gave me on that shelf. My dad used to explain it to me and I was kind of interested, but I really started collecting when I was in the sixth grade and had a social studies teacher that was known for his interest in WWII. We did a whole unit on WWII. We had a WWII day where we watched old movies and documentaries. Veterans came to our class to speak about their experiences too. Then we made models. I studied the history of old planes and made planes and my friend made a small display of D-Day.... When it was over I put the planes on a string and now they're hanging from my ceiling.

Sam also has a special box at home for scavenged pieces of old machines he finds outside: "Every time I see a piece of a machine or other things I find on the ground, I put it in this box and now I have all these broken parts." At the end of the interview Sam answered my question about what object was most important to him: "It's my grandpa's army hat that my dad gave me... and it's on my shelf... It's important, because it is what I'm interested in and it's my grandfather's."

STUDENTS' PERSONAL COLLECTIONS: OBJECTS AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Through objects, students learned about themselves and the world. Belk (1995) discusses the idea of collecting as an "extension of the self," stating that a collection is not a mere accumulation of material things, but rather a coherent act of self-expression and a physical extension of the self. Students in the seventh-grade class I observed used collected objects primarily as forms of self-expression. Sam created elaborate displays of miniature action figure sets on his shelves, which grew from his passion for learning about history. Madison used her collections as part of the aesthetic design of her room, which reflects her interest and knowledge about characters from popular culture. Dorothy, another student interviewed, used her collection of jewelry, clothes, and shoes for personal adornment. She explained that the designs of her grandmother's 1940s dresses and her gold shoes gave her an individualized look. Most importantly, students found collections to be a way to express their own interests and personalities and to make life meaningful.

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) found that many objects displayed in homes revealed personal life experiences, and so symbolized the self. Students' collections often reflected personal histories and past experiences. Lorraine collected 4H ribbons, school awards, and her own artwork in order to create scrapbooks, which were autobiographical documentations of her academic and artistic achievements. Sam's collection of his grandfather's World War II artifacts and his father's model cars physically connected him to his family history.

STUDENTS' PERSONAL COLLECTIONS: CREATIVE AND AESTHETIC EXPRESSION

All the collectors interviewed were attracted to the objects for visual and aesthetic reasons, even if it was just because they thought the objects "looked cool." Some students expressed fascination with their collected objects by narrating the physical attributes of these objects. Logan, who collected Star Wars figures and paraphernalia, described the design of his new Star Wars mask in vivid detail. Madison enjoyed placing the Pez containers in attractive displays on special stands, grouped by their association with particular movies or television series. Eugenia described how she looked at the shape and color of each crystal before deciding which to add to her collection.

A number of students revealed how they employed collections in artistic pursuits. Students used and displayed mass-produced toys, games, and other collection items like shells and stones in imaginative and inventive ways, and often as part of their room décor. Some students devised curatorial methods for organizing and arranging collections. Kate organized her books by series and subject, and her music CDs in alphabetical order. Hunter had special transparent containers for his Star Wars models.

THE MATERIAL WORLD OF YOUTH CULTURE: PRIVATE WORLDS OF WORK AND PLAY

The photographs that students took of their collections in domestic spaces illustrated how they interacted, played, and orchestrated their collections at home. Students used collected objects to reconnect with personal histories, employing non-linear time frames for reciting family memories and creating new narratives. They explored new identities in imaginary play with their collections. Through collected objects, such as video games and novels, students were able to experiment with alter egos, gendered roles, and alternative personalities.

Creative products emerged in different forms, which included performance pieces, where students played with collections and created action stories; narrative scrapbooks created with collected photographs and personal memorabilia; elaborate theatrical shelf displays; and more informal, altar-type assemblages. This creative practice was primarily informal and spontaneous, taking place in the privacy of home. Most often, students relied on their collections to provide relaxation, entertainment, and an escape from daily stresses (Nemeth, 2008).

I conclude that collections were valued by these seventh-graders for a variety of reasons. These included the following: promoting leisure activities, aesthetic pursuits, and art production; establishing socializing and bonding relationships with friends and families; creating community and cultural connections; instituting family and personal histories and narratives; forming one's personal and cultural identity; learning about the world; and providing material extension and expression of self. Students therefore were connected with their collected objects for emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic reasons.

CONSTRUCTING A MATERIAL CULTURE CURRICULUM BASED ON STUDENTS' COLLECTIONS

Many art educators (Blandy & Congdon, 2005; Bolin & Blandy, 2003; Duncum, 2001, 2002; Flood, Grauer, Irwin, & Zimmerman, 2004) have advocated for the construction of material culture-based curricula that encourage students to make connections in the classroom to their own cultural environments and collected artifacts. Incorporating students' own material objects for use in art production enables students to respond to objects in which they have knowledge, interest, and, at times, passion.

An introductory lesson on personal collections could start with a reflective writing activity in which students discuss questions like the following: What is a collection? Where can you see or find collections in your community? What do you collect? Does anyone in your family collect? How do you find items for your collections? Where do you keep your collection? How do you use or play with your collection? How does your personal collection reflect your personality? Do you think your personal collection reflects the culture today? If so, then how? Brainstorming possible ways collecting is used and valued would also be another way to initiate discussion about collecting practices.

My study also revealed that seventh-grade collectors had stories, histories, and memories connected with their collected objects, and that these young collectors were serious about documenting personal objects in creative and artistic ways. A photography assignment in an art classroom using collected objects as the subject matter is one way students might enjoy experimenting with and using their collections. All objects have the potential

to take on new lives as invented for them by the collector. Toys and miniature objects that students collected sometimes served as a device for fantasy and as a point for beginning a narrative. A fictional or factual account of the social life of a collected tourist object could be the subject of a graphic novel.

Other relevant studies might include classroom investigations into uses of miniatures and toys by contemporary artists. For instance, photographers Laurie Simmons and David Levinthal use a large number of collected props, toys, and found objects in the construction of staged sets, which they then photograph. Both artists confront gender issues through fictional narratives that often reference time, place, and social context of suburban middle class (Nemeth, 2005). Levinthal produced a series of images to reveal historic changes in Barbie's fashions and style; students could study and critique these and use them as models for documenting the history of their own cultural objects. Similarly, Levinthal's series of photographs of space toys and baseball figures could serve as sources for students interested in photographing their own collections. These two artists could be introduced to students as part of a discussion about how artists use collected objects not only to make art, but also to comment on social issues.

Personal objects and artifacts could be used in discussions about the aesthetic nature of objects as well as the cultural contexts in which they were created. Congdon, Hicks, and Blandy (2005) promote the use of students' collected tourist objects and souvenirs, acquired from their local communities and family travels, as powerful ways to initiate critical conversations about personal histories and broader understanding of geographic places. Marshall (2002) suggests having students use their collected souvenirs to curate a museum exhibition with descriptive labels and stories.

CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICE AND COLLECTING

Incorporating how artists have used collections and collecting as methods of artistic practice could be valuable for students to understand in relation to their own practices of collecting objects and producing art. After all, artists often have to hunt and gather to find the materials from which they make their work. Some artists collect from the natural world, while other artists acquire materials from salvage yards, flea markets, dime stores, the Internet, or other sites. Many contemporary artists construct artworks by incorporating, appropriating, and transforming aspects of collected objects and artifacts, including popular art and kitsch, into their work.

Some artists collect objects as a means of learning about and observing the world. Sometimes they use these materials directly in artmaking processes, and other times they simply use them to generate ideas. Learning about artistic practice could involve understanding the techniques or media by which an artist creates art, or it could entail investigating the conceptual approach through which a given artist makes art. Art practices often include processes of reproducing, documenting, collecting, collaborating, and experimenting, through the use of hybrid media, subject matter, and disciplines.

Artists Who Collect

Andy Warhol began collecting photographs and postcards of stars as a young boy and continued this activity throughout his artistic life. Joseph Cornell used his collected objects to create miniature cabinets of curiosity (www.warhol.org, 2006). Annette Messager's series, *Album Collections,* demonstrates how an artist can use collecting as a creative process to confront issues of identity and feminism (Bernadac, 2006). Some artists collect objects, looking for evidence like anthropologists do, in order to reveal larger cultural attitudes or patterns. Ellen Gallagher and Michael Ray Charles are contemporary artists who practice the art of collecting as a form of visual research to inform their art practice. Some of their collections consist of old posters and advertisements that depict stereotypical imagery

(Hamlin, 2001). Mike Kelley and Portia Munson use collected and recycled materials in their artmaking to address issues of consumerism and ecology. Ann Hamilton, Sophie Calle, Barbara Bloom, Carrie Mae Weems, Fred Wilson, and Mark Dion investigate ideas surrounding museum collections and curatorial practices. Their work questions institutional decisions related to display methodology and archiving practice in natural history and art museums (Sollins, 2005).

These artists and their collecting and artmaking strategies could be discussed as possible sources for exploring how artists learn and work through objects and visual materials. This approach could include studying practices of collecting through interdisciplinary, broad-based themes related to consumption, identity, time, memory, place, or travel. Art educators can help students understand how their own art-collecting practices may be similar to methodologies used by contemporary artists. They can also encourage students to explore personal collected objects as a way of investigating social and political ideas surrounding collecting, in aims to help students understand how their collecting practices fit into larger conceptual cultural practices.

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ENDNOTE

1 More in-depth information about the research study's conceptual framework, including the art teacher's collecting practices and classroom applications, can be found in an earlier article (Nemeth, 2008).

Making a Mayberry: Traditional Neighborhood Development as Material Culture

MICHELLE KRAFT

In *The Truman Show* (Rudin & Weir, 1998), Truman Burbank's life-as-TV-reality-show is filmed in an idyllic, small town of friendly neighbors and pastel-colored homes surrounded by manicured lawns. Director Peter Weir filmed these neighborhood scenes on location in Seaside, Florida, a community widely acknowledged as the first example of the New Urbanism, or Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). New Urbanism encompasses the values of "restoration of existing urban centers and towns..., the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities of real neighborhoods... and the preservation of our built legacy" as efforts to combat urban sprawl, build interrelated community, and prevent environmental deterioration (Congress for the New Urbanism, 1996). The canned neighborliness of Truman's town echoes the small-town nostalgia of its entertainment predecessors—Mayberry RFD and Hill Valley of *Back to the Future*—an ambiance that many TNDs try to replicate.

University students in an art education course studied the TND as material culture using Vintage Township (VT) in Lubbock, Texas. We compared VT to the Lubbock community at large in design, architectural style, and philosophy and mission. We explored denotations and connotations demonstrated by VT, evident in the "artifacts" of the neighborhood itself, its placement, and website. Students created their own "ideal" neighborhood in a collaborative class project that considered community as reflective of our material culture and desires.

CONSTRUCTING PLACE IN MATERIAL CULTURE

Analyzing ***community*** may include considerations of community-as-place and participatory aspects of community. While at face value these issues appear separate, they are closely intertwined. Stokrocki (2006) notes that culture (community's participatory attributes) manifests itself "through visible symbols situated in constructed and natural environments," providing a particular way of understanding that culture or community (p. 47). Such environments, Blandy (2001) adds, can serve as spaces for reflective public discourse. Inasmuch as these forms of material culture are situated within and embody values of culture, region, and identity, they can serve as mechanisms for dialogue toward democratic (art) education through which participants examine the meaning and cultural significance inherent within visual symbols (Burkhart, 2006; Congdon, Blandy, & Bolin, 2001; Kharod, 2006).

Traditional Neighborhood Development, Place, and Materiality

Feldhusen (2008) suggests that objects possess a "social life" because they help us construct our daily lives. Consequently, we choose or create the objects that "commemorate ourselves, mark life's passages, and establish and signify social relations... we collect to reminisce" (p. 25). Likewise, our built environments can serve as signifiers of who we perceive (or want) ourselves to be. TNDs evidence a desire for "a simpler way of life"—a collection of objects/built spaces that allow us to reminisce upon a lifestyle we may have never had and may itself be a media construction.[1] The New Urbanism, however, offers us the opportunity to build it anyway, from the ground up; TNDs enable us to (re)construct community—not just the buildings, but the **philosophy** of community, too.

The New Urbanism includes specific characteristics, such as "walkability," quality of life, diversity of community offerings (i.e., homes, shops, markets, offices, etc. in close proximity to one another), quality design, and "traditional neighborhood structure" (TND Partners, 2008). These last two qualities emphasize community defined by a "sense of place" and aesthetics, including a "discernable center and edge" for the community and "public

open spaces designed as civic art" (TND Partners, 2008). A TND, therefore, is distinct from the larger community in which it is embedded, its separation clearly discernable by physical, aesthetic boundaries—a small town plopped into a larger urban community.

SETTING, PARTICIPANTS, AND PROCEDURE FOR THE PROJECT

Live Life Better: Vintage Township in Lubbock, Texas

Lubbock (population 200,000) is situated on the West Texas South Plains, an agricultural area primarily dedicated to cotton. Over 60% of the city's population is under age 35; just over 18% of residents are over 55 years of age. The cost of living is low, and the average household income is $38, 861.80 (LEDA, 2008). The population is 31% Hispanic, 9% African American, and 60% Anglo and other ethnicities. As for architectural design, the single story ranch-style house dominates. Porches are rare, except in the oldest of homes; even windows tend to be small on many houses, a precaution against tornadoes.

Vintage Township describes itself as "a town within a town" (Vintage Township, 2008) and is located in the southern part of Lubbock, in an area bordered by fragmented, new development and agricultural land (see Figure 1). VT broke ground in October 2006, and has witnessed slow but steady growth since then.[2] Long-term plans for VT "consist of 1,700 homes, townhomes, and apartments... over 36 pocket parks... [and] over 300,000 square feet of shopping, dining, entertainment, and offices"; the town map also includes plans for a church, fire station, assisted living facility, and library (Vintage Township, 2008). The entrance side of VT is bordered by a brick wall, and the remaining sides are surrounded by undeveloped land.

On approach, the visitor is greeted by a large billboard with the Vintage Township slogan: "Live Life Better." Homes include classic American styles (Georgian and Louisiana French, Colonial Revival, and Victorian), faced in cement board and built upon grades to evoke wood-frame, pier-and-beam construction and to allow for high front porches. Most houses are two-story; this—and the fact they are built near the streets and the streets are

FIGURE 1. View of Vintage Township.

FIGURE 2. Students visit Vintage Township.

narrow—makes the homes appear close together. As one student observed, "You get a very strong feeling that they [the houses] are being 'pulled' toward each other and the center of the community" (Anicia, Personal communication, September 25, 2008). In this way, though, the aesthetic of the homes and neighborhood are very different from residential areas in the rest of Lubbock. Home prices in VT are between $175,000 and $1,000,000 or more[3] (Vintage Township, 2008).

The Class and Project

Nostalgia and community. We studied TNDs as material culture during the fall 2008 semester in the Explorations in Media class, a sophomore-level course required of art education majors that also included non-major students.[4] The class used VT's website and the notion of "community" in material culture as the springboard for our discussion, reflecting upon the concepts of neighborliness and nostalgia as characteristic of VT and its mission.

We also examined the Regionalist movement in American art, and the style and themes[5] of that art period as it coincided with the Great Depression, a time of global uncertainty. We drew comparisons to the current trend of TNDs, with their emphasis on small-town atmosphere and hominess, at our own time of global insecurity.[6] Combining the "fine arts" movement of Regionalism with examination of TND was useful inasmuch as

> [i]mages are related to previous knowledge, integrated with other images that have been created by other people, and recalled for various purposes, including the purpose of interpreting and creating new images. Through mixes of popular visual culture and fine art, new images are produced and new meanings of art (as a category) emerge. (Freedman, 2003, p. 5)

Visiting Vintage. When we visited VT, we stopped first at the information center where students were able to see the planned layout for the neighborhood, look through a variety of house plans, and witness how the VT information center marketed the neighborhood and its values. For instance, cookies and tea were available for visitors; images depicting small-town life[7] hung throughout; there was also a wall displaying black-and-white photographs of people who had purchased homes in VT. We learned, too, of VT's efforts to actively build community[8] and VT's "democratic approach" to shaping the community and its offerings.[9] We toured the development (see Figure 2), surveying building progress, architecture and design, and VT's values and mission as demonstrated from "ground level."[10]

Building community. Observations from our VT tour informed project plans as students created a model of their own "ideal community." We also reflected upon issues of inclusiveness and exclusiveness within "community." For instance, students noted that the price point and location of VT spoke to exclusivity rather than inclusiveness. One student explained, "I don't think anyone is verbally or obviously omitted, but the money kind of omits [some] people" (Jessica, Personal communication, September 25, 2008).

Of the many business and services that they considered, the 13 students in the class selected 11 buildings to create for their town.[11] Students worked singly or in pairs using assemblage and pâpier maché to sculpt their buildings. Instructions included: (1) reflecting our study of TNDs, (2) interpreting the concept of "ideal" neighborhood, (3) reaching consensus on the layout of and name for their community,[12] and (4) sharing how each of their buildings/services fit within the community.

HUB CITY

The students chose the name "Hub City" for their community because it would be the "center of everything."[13] Green spaces and common areas were important to their town so we moved to a grassy area outdoors for students to arrange and present their community. Students placed their multi-purpose community center and adjoining park at the city center (See Figure 3). These sites functioned as formal and informal gathering places for citizens. Students' designs symbolically conveyed their values on how community should function. For instance, RaShae shaped her trees in the park as upwardly extended hands with leaves of yarn interlacing the branches/fingers to remind "the viewer that the goal of the park is unity" (RaShae, Personal communication, October 13, 2008).

Likewise, the restaurant—Wyte Flyte Soup and Salad Kitchen—was shaped like a large winged Hermes foot, recalling Route 66 theme restaurants of the 1950s. Justin described his desire to create a restaurant that suited the needs and philosophy of the class community:

> It is a soup and salad buffet with roof top seating and optional sleepovers. The buffet is actually modeled after church potlucks.... All are welcome to give of their bounty and to receive of the common pool. I felt like this brings together those close knit community values of breaking bread together. However, the restaurant is just a vessel with no employees; the service belongs to the community. (Justin, personal communication, October 9, 2008)

Other examples included the Peace Market (see Figure 4), a two-part complex shaped like a yin-yang, and the combination church/jail. With the latter, Ricky explained that his idea was to bring people of the community in contact with the prisoners: "It will exclude the scared—[only] those who have faith will go," he explained (Personal communication, October 2, 2008).

In describing how they wanted their community to function, students emphasized such ideals such as peace, belonging, stewardship (environmental and toward those disenfranchised), health, and interaction. The coffee shop/café was dedicated to ethical trade, provided meals to shut-ins, and volunteered community cleanup, for example, and the transportation hub offered alternative-fueled public transportation and was equipped with bike racks for commuters. Other structures, such as the elementary school, reminded us

FIGURE 3 (LEFT). Students present their community.

FIGURE 4 (BELOW). The Peace Market in Hub City.

that—as insulated and safe as we may try to make our communities—there are still concerns for safety. A bright red fortress with a large central courtyard, this building was meant to provide an island of security for students. Jessie described her design as "very enclosed" for reasons of safety, asserting that no one from outside the community would be permitted in the building (Personal communication, October 10, 2008). Thus, Jessie demonstrated that, even in communities that desire to be inclusive, there are always those omitted either by design or through subtext.

REFLECTIONS: (DE-)CONSTRUCTING A TND

Students recognized denoted and connoted messages in the concept of TNDs and in Vintage Township, demonstrating their recognition in their own constructed community. They applauded VT's efforts at building relationship through neighborhood design and community functions, but questioned whether such efforts might be artificial and if it was even possible to "live a life with your family the way you remember life when you were a kid" (Vintage Township, 2008). For instance, students noted that "even the name 'Vintage'" evoked a simpler life (Marisa, Personal communication, September 25, 2008), but it also seemed "make believe" (Ashley, Personal communication, September 25, 2008) and "not traditional but a new movement in a contrived setting" (Justin, Personal communication, September 25, 2008). Duncum (2000) echoes these ideas with his assertion that the pressures of adulthood often compel adults to create "idealized childhoods" so that "childhood becomes a mythical place, a rich depository for qualities we have lost and long to recover" (p. 30).

Students also identified connotations related to inclusion and exclusion in VT. The website and activities overtly target families and retirees. There were evident omissions, too, in that all the visual imagery in billboards and in the visitor center depicted **Anglo** families and elderly.[14] Even the photographs of those who had bought homes in VT revealed a (by far) predominantly Anglo constituency.

Some of the students recognized VT as an indicator of our consumer society. "We're building nostalgia from the ground up," Rodger explained (Personal communication, September 25, 2008); Justin characterized it as "promulgated by our desires as consumers" (Personal communication, September 25, 2008). Wightman (2006), in having his students study a Kmart® store as an artifact of material culture, holds that such examination helps students recognize our own consumptive culture. It "not only introduces students to the practice of studying artistic concepts and meaning outside traditional fine arts contexts, it also establishes new processes of critically examining consumer-based products for their aesthetic meaning and cultural interplay" (pp. 127-128).

Extending art education into the realm of material culture enables students to think critically about our cultural artifacts and how they demonstrate our desires as consumers. Examining the concept and practice of traditional neighborhood development further engages students to reflect upon our hopes and desires for the communities in which we live and how those ideals are communicated through built environments. The students valued the efforts of Vintage Township toward relational community-building and reflected these values in their community design, expanding upon this to envision a community that included their own values of ecological responsibility, interdependence among community members, health, and beauty, all while considering the role of self as citizen.

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ENDNOTES

1 So pervasive is our longing for such a community that entertainment media has repeatedly offered us a variety of incarnations in Mayberry, Stepford, Pleasantville, and a host of other quaint small towns.

2 Phase 1 of construction included single-family homes, a "bungalow court," and "brownstone" apartments radiating from Founder's Park. Plans for Phase 2 include additional homes and the first commercial buildings of the development.

3 But many students also noted that the least expensive home offered currently for sale were the brownstone apartments at $285,000. The average home price for Lubbock, TX, for April of 2009 was $158,569 according to AOL Real Estate at http://realestate.aol.com/lubbock-tx-real-estate

4 Because our program is small—one that cannot accommodate separate studio courses in a variety of media, such as ceramics and printmaking—this course was designed for our art education majors so that they could have exposure to these media. The class, however, is open to non-majors as well; in fall 2008, the class included five art education majors, one visual communications (graphic design) major, three early childhood education majors, and four majors from outside the areas of art and education—13 students total.

5 For instance, nostalgia for the "golden years" and tributes to uniquely American themes—such as American tall tales, country life, and the "American work ethic"—all set in the breadbasket of the Midwest.

6 That is, the wars in the Middle East and violence in society. At the time of our project in September 2008, the economic crisis had not yet come to light. Had we conducted our class discussion a few weeks later, that event would have added a new dimension to our conversation.

7 Such as children playing on green lawns, families enjoying lemonade on porches, and neighbors outside taking walks or visiting with one another.

8 Through events such as festivals, play dates for neighborhood children, and evening movies-in-the-park.

9 For instance, it held a town hall-style meeting where community members decided upon the priorities for the next phase—the inclusion of a physical town hall, a community swimming pool, and a "general store"/coffee shop/restaurant.

10 Our discussion questions included the following.

- In what ways does Vintage Township adhere to the characteristics of a TND that we have discussed?
- How does VT demonstrate its apparent community philosophies (both the stated and implied—denoted and connoted—values)? How does its plan and current stage of development demonstrate these (give examples)? What role do architecture and design (and even the name Vintage Township) play in conveying its philosophies and what do these things connote?
- Who lives in Vintage Township and to whom is it marketed? How do you know (give examples)? Is anyone omitted from the target audience? Explain.
- What "ideal neighborhood" examples can you give from material culture? What makes them "ideal"?
- If you were constructing an "ideal" neighborhood, what considerations would you include in its design and execution? (How do YOU define "ideal neighborhood"?)

11 A public transportation hub, a school, a hotel/bed and breakfast, a park/community garden, a church/jail, a clinic, a spa, a restaurant, a mixed use market hall/housing complex, a coffee shop, and a community center/library.

12 Students had to agree upon which building(s) would comprise the "town center" and how the other buildings would be grouped around that center; they also had to consider how these decisions would reflect their thoughts on "community" and on their own constructed community. For this component, students considered the following questions.

- How do you envision your chosen business/service to function within the "ideal" community?
- How do the visual elements of your building/park convey these concepts?
- Why is your business/service important to the community?
- Who within the community benefits from your business/service and who might be excluded, and what ideals does that demonstrate for the community?

13 This is also a nickname for Lubbock as the "hub of the South Plains"; highways running from Lubbock outward extend like the spokes from the hub of a (covered wagon?) wheel.

14 We found only one, very blurred background image of an olive-skinned child of ambiguous ethnicity in the images displayed in the information center. On a more recent visit to VT's new visitor center, I noticed that the media images included much more ethnic diversity; if one of the tenets of the New Urbanism is "diversity of people—of ages, classes, cultures, and races" (TND Partners, 2008), it would seem that Vintage Township is most strong in the area of age.

There's Gnome Place Like Home: Using Yard Art as an Instructional Strategy to Help Graduate Students Gain an Understanding of Qualitative Research Methodologies

■ CHRISTINA BAIN

Like the morning dew glistening on blades of grass, material culture is the residue we leave by living our lives. Some material culture studies analyze objects in and of themselves. These diverse artifacts can range from ordinary everyday objects such as sheet music (Erickson, 1983) or Coca-Cola bottles (Gilborn, 1982) to cutting edge technological devices (Eglash, 2006; Lubar, 1996; Vannini, 2009). Other approaches within material culture focus on the human or social relationship that occurs between the subject and object (Gottdiener, 1995; Tilley, Keane, Kuchler, Rowlands, & Spyer, 2006). For example, Peterson (2009) seeks to "make sense of the ways people use, think about, and interact with microwave ovens in their daily lives" (p. 229). Regardless of the particular object or approach, material culture offers enormous possibilities for teaching and research. This chapter explains how and why I utilized one specific form of material culture, yard art, to help graduate students gain an understanding of qualitative research methodologies.

A RATIONALE FOR INCORPORATING YARD ART INTO A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH COURSE

As do many teachers, I begin planning for the courses I teach far in advance, especially when those courses are new to me. This was certainly the case when I taught an introductory graduate course in qualitative research. The question that most guided my process of organizing and planning this course was: How can I make an introductory qualitative research class engaging, useful, and challenging for graduate students who are at different points in their doctoral coursework? As I considered various logistics, such as textbook selection,[1] schedules, guest speakers, and assignments, my mind kept returning to the task of creating an engaging research course. I knew the readings would provide conceptual information about qualitative methodologies, but would that be enough?

As a graduate student, I struggled with connecting theoretical knowledge to my own experiences. Now as a university art educator I have come to believe a primary role I have is to help students clearly understand how theory and practice are interwoven. At first I considered relating weekly assignments to the research interests of each student. While this approach probably could have been successful, my concern was that students would focus on their interests rather than the subtle qualities that distinguish various forms of qualitative research from one another. Moreover, newer students would be at a disadvantage since they had not selected their dissertation topics. Ultimately, I decided that engaging in a common topic for the research class would help to level the playing field.

What should I select as the unifying theme for the research course? A possible answer was practically under my nose. As my husband and I took our dogs for their evening walk, I noticed a broken lawn ornament in a neighbor's yard. After wondering how the ugly-duckling sculpture met its demise, I began to wonder why people display certain objects in their yards. Why did this family choose a duck sculpture? Are ducks significant to them? Did they think it was beautiful?

FIGURE 1. Gnome.

As we continued walking, I considered the objects in my own yard. My husband, an Army veteran, recently installed a tall flagpole from which we fly either the United States flag or a flag from our alma mater, Syracuse University. Both have personal significance to us. As additional questions about lawn ornaments began to enter my mind, I realized that yard art offered a perfect example of commonplace objects we frequently see, but rarely contemplate deeply. Why not use this category of often whimsical objects as the unifying theme for this research course? In the end, my approach proved successful. One student later commented that this strategy "provided a healthy balance between the yard art as something kind of fun, normal, and mundane, and qualitative research which, to many of us as beginning researchers, was still very abstract and probably a bit intimidating" (personal communication, May 29, 2009).

YARD ART SCHOLARSHIP

Is yard art tacky, trivial, or tantalizingly terrific? Prior scholarship in this area tends to focus on the design of gardens and outdoor spaces, as opposed to the objects situated in yards (Bormann, Balmori, & Geballe, 1993; Jenkins, 1994; Schroeder, 1993). Nokes (2007) argues that gardens and lawns are ripe with the potential to create memory and meaning. A few objects that may support her point are the hot pink flamingos, wee gnomes, and religious icons adorning many American lawns. In addition, scholars within the fields of history, folklore, sociology, anthropology, and cultural geography are among the many who have examined various issues and practices related to this topic (Bronner, 1986; Ferguson, 1977; Jackson, 1994).

DIVERSE STUDENTS

The field of material culture studies has an interdisciplinary nature and embraces a wide range of individuals, objects, and disciplines (Kingery, 1996). Fittingly, my research class was a diverse group of students. The two males and six females ranged in age from late twenties to early forties. Although all were doctoral students, one was new to the program, several had completed a semester or more, and three were nearly done with their coursework. The class was composed of one international student and seven US American students. Of these seven, one identified herself as Native American, three identified themselves as Hispanic, one as Asian American, and two as Caucasian. Although students were not expected to formulate purpose statements and research questions about yard art that were based on their own backgrounds, as we will see later, their past knowledge and experiences were important because students made personal connections to the topic of yard art through their families, cultures, and communities.

THE FIRST CLASS

My personal example of yard art, a Syracuse gnome, was placed in the front of the room on the first night of class (Figure 1). It received a few curious glances while I took attendance. After explaining the syllabus, I noticed a few more furrowed brows among the students when I stated that yard art would be an important part of our class throughout the semester. Prior to our first meeting, I had requested that each student bring an example of yard art to class. I assumed it would be unnecessary to define yard art. However, one student reflected,

> When Dr. Bain asked us to bring a piece of "yard art" to our first class session, I was unclear about what that even meant. I found myself not relating to this assignment, because I do not have any found objects in my own yard. Mistakenly, I brought a piece of **art** (a clay mask) that I had purchased at a **yard** sale. Once I saw that she meant pink flamingos and kitschy gnomes, I realized that I had a limited understanding of yard art, and in hindsight some uninformed prejudices about yard art all together. (personal communication, April 15, 2009)

After classmates compared their wide range of yard art objects, we watched *Gnome*, a short Glamour Reel film featuring Lauren Graham.[2] Although this film is not about yard art per se, the main characters (a doctor's wife and three transvestites) photograph a gnome in various locations, symbolizing their personal journeys. After we viewed the film, I asked if yard art was worthy of research. Most of the class replied, "No!" but one student hesitantly speculated that **perhaps** it could be examined in a scholarly manner. I then presented Sheehy's (1991) dissertation about plastic pink flamingos, Jackson's (2006) dissertation about African American yard art in Iowa, and Ramos' (1997) chapter about Mexican-American yard art in Texas. When they finished scanning these manuscripts, one student exclaimed, "I had no idea that someone could possibly write an entire dissertation on something as crazy as pink flamingos!" (personal communication, August 30, 2007).

LENSES OF QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGIES

To the novice researcher, the vast number of methods associated with qualitative research can be daunting. For example, Tesch (1990) identified 28 distinct approaches. To help students learn about and discern between several of the major qualitative methodologies, this introductory research course examined the following: case study, phenomenology, ethnography, narrative analysis, oral history, grounded theory, critical research, action research, and arts-based research (see Figure 2). One student reflected on the broad sense of qualitative research introduced through this course:

> It's been over a year since I took this class and to this day, I still see yard art and think of the qualitative perspectives of the class. Yard art was a way to help us see qualitative research in a grander sense, and thankfully for this class, I have become more aware of how I see my research interests and the different methodological approaches. (personal communication, May 21, 2009)

FIGURE 2. Course topics.

DATE	TOPIC
Week 1	Introduction, syllabus, course outline, projects, and yard art as a starting point for planning and understanding research
Week 2	Philosophical Frameworks
Week 3	Research Designs/ Proposals
Week 4	Case Study
Week 5	Phenomenology
Week 6	Ethnography
Week 7	Narrative Analysis/ Oral History
Week 8	Grounded Theory
Week 9	Critical Research
Week 10	Action Research
Week 11	State conference—no class
Week 12	Arts-Based Research
Week 13	Holiday-UNT CLOSED
Week 14	Data Collection
Week 15	Data Analysis
Finals Week	Final Presentations

Though most course assignments focused on yard art, another was intended primarily to help students clarify their beliefs as researchers. I felt it was important that students not only articulate their individual stances as researchers, but also realize that research is an interpretive act colored by various epistemologies. After reading Chapter 2: "Philosophical, Paradigm, and Interpretive Frameworks" by Creswell (2007), students explained in a three-page paper which philosophical framework(s) they identified with. My intention in assigning this paper was to help students understand how researchers' interpretive frameworks determine how they see the world as well as how and why they conduct research.

HYPOTHETICAL QUALITATIVE STUDIES WITH AUTHENTIC CONNECTIONS

Most course assignments integrated yard art in a significant way. For example, between weeks 4 and 12, students constructed purpose statements and research questions for hypothetical qualitative studies based on the methodology that had been featured that week (e.g., case study, ethnography). The only instruction or limitation I provided was that these hypothetical studies had to focus on some aspect of yard art. I did not provide further instructions or limitations. To help students understand how to examine the same topic through different qualitative lenses, we reviewed Richards and Morse's (2007) Table 2.4: Comparison of Three Methods to Conduct a Hypothetical Project, "Arrivals and Departures: Patterns of Human Attachment" (p. 38). This chart compares possible research questions, settings, strategies for data collection, and types of results framed through phenomenological, ethnographic, and grounded theory methodologies. Realizing that one source could serve as the focus for a variety of weekly methodological assignments, a student described this "a-ha" moment within the understanding of a qualitative research project:

> I decided to go on a **yard art hunt** in my own neighborhood, and I discovered that there was a shop called Yard Ideas located less than a mile from my home. I took an afternoon to go and check it out, and I was stunned with the thousands of concrete and plaster figures in the shop's inventory. I took lots of photographs and spoke with the shop owner who had been making the figures at this location for over thirty years. I made the decision that I would tailor all of my weekly assignments around the Yard Ideas shop, inventory, and staff. I was so excited to share my yard **finds** with our class. I created a PowerPoint presentation to show the class all of the types of figures available at the shop. I realized that I could categorize them in numerous ways from puppy dogs, cherubs, gargoyles, and of course gnomes. But more interestingly, I could also identify stereotypes in figures of the Sleeping Sombrero Man, a Big Indian Chief, and even Little Black Sambo. There was much more going on than selling **yard ideas** for decorating a landscape—there was actual theory there at Yard Ideas—that I could explore. Suddenly, the opportunity to really delve into research concepts became exciting and engaging for me as a doctoral student. (personal communication, April 15, 2009)

For these assignments, students found it helpful to start with Creswell's (2007) purpose statement script:

> The purpose of this _____ (narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, case) study is (was? will be?) to _____ (understand? describe? develop? discover?) the _____ (central phenomenon of the study) for _____ (the participants) at _____ (the site). At this stage in the research, the _____ (central phenomenon) will be generally defined as _____ (a general definition of the central concept). (pp 103-104)

As illustration, I include three student examples of ethnographic purpose statements. These students connected to the topic of yard art through their existing knowledge. In example one, Diana connected through her familiarity with Choctaw culture; in example two, Andres framed yard art through familial practices; and in example three, Laura Lee explored routines of individuals within a neighborhood yard art store.

Example One by Diana Gibson
The purpose of this ethnographic study is to discover the common characteristics, differences, and meanings of the yard art displayed on the reservation of a Choctaw tribe in Chickashae, Oklahoma. At this stage in the research, the characteristics will be generally defined as interviews and observations of five families living on the Choctaw reservation.

- What beliefs or legends are behind certain pieces of yard art?

Example Two by Andres Peralta
The purpose of this ethnographic study is to understand the social interaction, and passing of knowledge between generations within a community of yard art makers who choose to work with found objects. At this point in the study the community will be defined as male members of my immediate family—father, uncles, brothers and cousins who work with found objects in order to create yard art. The study will be conducted through observing each individual's process for choosing found objects with which to work, interviews conducted with the individuals, and visual documentation of each during the creation process.

- How do the men inform and educate one another as the knowledge of creating a piece of yard art is passed from one generation to another?

Example Three by Laura Lee McCartney
The purpose of this ethnographic study is to describe and interpret a culture-sharing group, namely the owners who sell cement figures at Yard Ideas in Keller, Texas. At this stage, the ethnography will generally be defined as research oriented toward describing and interpreting the shared and learned patterns of values, beliefs, and language of this group. This ethnography will involve extended observations of the group through participant observation at Yard Ideas through a 1-year volunteer apprenticeship where I will be immersed in the day-to-day lives of the group.

- What are the shared beliefs, practices, artifacts, folk knowledge, and behavior of this group?

Not all students utilized personal memories and experiences to formulate their purpose statements. One student recognized that, compared to her classmates, she treated these assignments perfunctorily. She explained,

> Unfortunately, I never did take any position about yard art or try and move beyond my own unarticulated personal stereotypes on the topic; thus, my purpose statements and questions became mere exercises which were not used as real learning opportunities. I short-changed myself by not clearly aligning myself as a researcher, with the theme of yard art, in a personally relevant manner. Looking back, I appreciate how important making authentic connections between the researcher and the area of exploration are to framing effective and meaningful qualitative inquiries. (personal communication, May 27, 2009)

Students gave their classmates paper copies of weekly assignments. Through the ensuing discussions, they began to critique one another and grapple with the differences between qualitative methodologies. This process was often difficult and somewhat frustrating for the students. Struggles occurred as the students wrestled with theory, epistemologies, or with authors' styles of writing. I recall a student saying at one point that the readings on phenomenology were "as clear as mud" (personal communication, September 27, 2007).

GAINING AN APPRECIATION FOR MULTIPLE VIEWPOINTS

Though I did not expect yard art to be a controversial topic, our class had several heated discussions throughout the course of the semester. Opinions about yard art ran the gamut from "**adorable**" and "**cute**" to "**ugly**" and "**crap**." One student recalled how listening to different viewpoints helped her grow, both personally and professionally:

> Interestingly, as the semester progressed, I began to appreciate the various ways I could apply visual methodologies, and of course research methodologies to make my own meanings with yard art. And more importantly, I valued hearing how my classmates made their own connections to yard art as well. It was revealing—not only did I learn about research, I learned a lot about the other students in our class. (personal communication, April 15, 2009)

Another student questioned whether his strong words might have stifled further conversation:

> In a discussion that took place on ethnographic research, centered around the theme of yard art, it was very difficult to remain passive. It may be possible, through my participation, that I unintentionally imposed my ideas or even super-imposed my ideas on those of other participants. (personal communication, October 11, 2007)

Listening and seeking to understand other viewpoints was both an important component of this class and a major way in which students learned. For example, at the beginning of the semester, Ya, our international student, was unfamiliar with the concept of American yard art. Her classmates diligently provided many explanations and examples to help her understand this phenomenon. As the weeks unfolded, students surmised that Ya's process of coming to understand yard art was similar to the role of a qualitative researcher observing the customs and activities of people in a foreign country. While some practices may be quite familiar, other customs differ from one's past experience. For this reason, qualitative researchers must not assume that their perceptions mirror the understandings of participants. Ya reflected,

> I think that Yard Art is just among many other subjects regarding humans' humble lives and provides motivation for us to understand human existence from multiple perspectives including society, culture, interpersonal relationships, intrapersonal communication, and so on. In this sense, Yard Art became a chosen medium in our discussions by which we learned how to EXPLAIN the complexity of human life by looking at and comparing those different perspectives. (personal communication, May 27, 2009)

CONCLUSION

Visual culture has gained attention as a focus of research (Darts, Tavin, Sweeny, & Derby, 2008; Duncum, 2006), and as an approach for teaching in art education (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005). Bolin and Blandy (2003) argue that material culture studies hold further, greater promise for our field. Diverse objects and artifacts of material culture surround us in everyday life and present many opportunities for art teachers and researchers alike. I found that integrating yard art into an introductory qualitative research class made the course engaging, challenging, and memorable, and in this way the study of material culture enabled an unfolding and dynamic outcome for my students and for me.[3]

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ENDNOTES

1 In addition to a wide variety of readings, the main texts for this class included the following:
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2 *Gnome* is available on YouTube.

3 I would like to thank all of the graduate students in this qualitative research course, especially those who contributed their reflections to this article: Kirstina Elizondo, Diana Gibson, Cindy Hasio, Maria Leake, Laura Lee McCartney, Andres Peralta, and Ya Yang.

Children's Playdolls as Pedagogical Sites for Art Education

SHENG KUAN CHUNG

Historical inquiry into the material culture of the doll unveils much information about this object's wide array of materials, forms, functions, and meanings. Human-made objects like playdolls are not mere playthings for children; they also mirror broad artistic and socio-cultural developments at particular times. Thus, children's playdolls reflect, consciously and subconsciously, the prevailing and ever-changing beliefs, values, and attitudes of the individuals who manufactured or used them, and by extension of the larger society to which they belonged (Schlereth, 1982).

This chapter first presents a brief historical look at dolls, delineating their varied materials, functions, and cultural significance. It then discusses several social issues related to playdolls used by American children, in exploring the ideologies, attitudes, and assumptions manifested through these objects. Finally, the conclusion addresses the pedagogical implications for art education in using playdolls as investigative sites both to enable personal agency and to develop critical knowledge and cultural sensitivity.

A HISTORY OF DOLLS

Throughout history, dolls have existed in various forms and have fulfilled many different functions. They have been composed of a range of materials, from stone, clay, wood, bone, cloth, and paper to porcelain, china, rubber, and plastics. Most dolls that have survived from ancient times are made of clay or bronze. Historians such as Fraser (1966) have traced the origins of doll-making to the dawn of human civilization, specifically to the ceremonial rites in early societies where, in some cases, dolls were given to children to play with after the ceremony. While both ancient and modern societies used dolls for religious ceremonies or rituals, people today primarily associate dolls with child's play. Over time, the functions of the doll shifted from the domains of religion to those of trade, teaching, and child's activity.

Archeologists have found that, prior to making dolls as play objects, prehistoric people fashioned them for reasons related to religion and fertility. The early Egyptians (ca. 2000 BC) buried doll-like figures with their owners as a symbol of their continuing service to them after death (Fraser, 1966). The early Hopi Indians gave their children dolls to teach them about their religion. Many religions have understood carved wooden dolls as physical embodiments of the spirits and gods they worship, and some religions do so today. European wooden dolls date back to 14th-century Germany (Gadia-Smitley, 1987). The production and trade of fashion dolls made of rags or carved from wood began in the medieval era, when the French produced dolls to model clothing and market the latest fashions abroad; in the 17th century this became an important part of the fashion trade. These French fashion dolls were considerably larger and more elaborate than fashion playdolls of the 20th century (Fraser, 1966), showing details of the dress and hairstyle and exemplifying the ideal female body, thus reflecting the fashion trends of the time. Somewhat later, lithographic drawings (Ariès, 1962) and magazines gradually replaced fashion dolls as the bridge of fashion communications between countries.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, dolls were used as didactic instruments. Because adults viewed playdolls as a pragmatic agent for the education of females, the dolls of this era reflect prevailing ideologies of womanhood. White middle-class mothers used dolls to teach young girls about the virtues of womanhood, as well as domestic skills and standards. They preferred dolls that taught personal hygiene and the principles of motherhood (Formanek-Brunell, 1993). Although French and German porcelain dolls were popular at this time, demand grew to produce safer, more durable portable dolls for children to use in play. In response, manufacturers increasingly made dolls from wood and fabric, which

eventually formed the roots of the American doll industry (Theriault, 1983). Technological innovation changed the materials used for dolls, leading to more suitable dolls that children could actually play with. These materials included composition (a mixture of wood pulp and glue), wax, papier-mâché, and rubber (Fraser, 1966).

In the 19th century, the doll-making industry flourished, as is evident in the many types and materials used to construct dolls during that period. Wax was a popular material because it could be used to create a doll's fine complexions and realistic features. The use of rubber, plastic, and, later, vinyl brought revolutionary changes in doll-making, and thus enabled manufacturers to produce dolls with more-lifelike features. Mass reproduction enabled dolls to become more affordable and hygienic (Fraser, 1966). Beyond their use for child's play, modern times have seen the additional expansion of the functions of dolls: health professionals use dolls for instruction and to practice medical procedures or therapy, while artists use wooden mannequins to help model the figure.

PLAYDOLLS AS PEDAGOGICAL SITES

Since the 17th century, dolls have functioned as pedagogical sites. The Japanese displayed ceremonial dolls at home to teach children about social hierarchy, etiquette, and the country's history (Fraser, 1966). In the late 18th century, White middle-class Americans used playdolls to guide young girls in developing the virtues of obedience, submissiveness, and chastity. These playdolls were dressed in the style of adult women to help young girls imagine the women they would become (Reinhardt, 2006). French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau reflected a similar view in *Émile* (1762/1979), in which he suggested that a girl's interest in dolls be encouraged because he believed that it would teach her to please men and be subservient as a grown woman. In the Progressive era, American mothers used cloth dolls to teach girls maternal skills and domestic standards (Formanek-Brunell, 1993). Dolls served as an instrument of feminine education in modesty, obedience, and docility (Reinhardt, 2006).

Thus, the notion of using playdolls as pedagogical sites is nothing new. Playdolls continue to occupy an important role in early childhood development, intentionally or not, particularly as children begin to explore their identity and surroundings. Playdolls offer children more than sheer amusement. Notably, children are cognitively and affectively engaged when playing with dolls. Through toys and play, children learn about others and the outside world. Furthermore, dolls are ideological sites through which children acquire the worldviews, values, and attitudes the dolls manifest.

Examining the aesthetic forms and meanings of playdolls enables educational participants to explore how we as members of a society make, use, and respond to dolls in defining who we are and what we treasure. Such examination can help us in becoming aware of and deconstructing the various values and beliefs conveyed to children through playdolls. For instance, investigating popular children's playdolls and action figures (e.g., Barbie,® Bratz,® G.I. Joe,® and Tarzan®) in the classroom can raise many unsettling social issues. These dolls are relevant pedagogical sites to engage young children in exploring such critical issues as the idealization of the female body, dehumanization of people of color, inferiorization of ethnic minorities, and glorification of violence.

Idealization of the Female Body

Many feminists accuse playdolls (e.g., Barbie and Bratz) of being agents of a hegemonic patriarchal culture in which young girls are indoctrinated into sexualized gender roles (Jacobs, 2008). These dolls also promote an idealistic female body image that is distorted, even unhealthy. Lord (2004) asserts that Barbie is a toy designed "to teach women what—for better or for worse—is expected of them by society" (p. 8). She draws connections between men's sexual fetishes and Barbie, "a space-age fertility archetype" (p. 216), who has long hair which could be read as seductive and breasts that are disproportionately large in relation to the rest of her body.

Ruth Handler, co-founder of Mattel, was inspired to create Barbie when she found a sex doll named Lilli during a trip to Germany (Stern & Harrington, 1998). She thought that making a female doll with adult breasts that was intended for use by young girls might help those girls deal with the bodily changes that occur during puberty (Stern & Harrington, 1998). The influence of Barbie on children has been tremendous, as evident in a video documentary in which a toddler told a news reporter, "If you don't look like Barbie, you are not pretty and you won't have any friends" (video recording in Stern & Harrington, 1998).

Like Barbie, Bratz dolls construct a kind of sexualized archetype of female bodies. Bratz dolls, which are designed for girls aged 4 to 8, can be characterized by their large heads with wide eyes, full lips, and small noses. Dressed in sexually provocative clothing such as miniskirts, fishnet stockings, and feather boas, Bratz dolls are seen by some to project female bodies as objects of the male gaze and sexual desire. Targeted at young children and associated with adult sexuality, they become an issue of educational importance and a potential site for critical analysis and discussion.

FIGURE 1. Chinese Barbie by Mattel in the "Dolls of the World" series. *Photo by author.*

Inferiorization of Ethnic Minorities

Playdolls depicting derogatory images of ethnic minorities were prevalent in America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and such ethnic stereotyping in children's toys continues in today's multicultural American society. Like other artifacts of material culture, playdolls, especially those portraying non-White people, reveal a great deal about the exercise of power in society and how the dominant group advances and legitimizes its own cultural values and beliefs, while using stereotypes to inferiorize other cultural groups that differ in values or physical characteristics. In short, mass-manufactured playdolls are not as innocent as they appear. Ethnic stereotyping can be seen in the ethnic counterparts of Barbie, Bratz, and Tarzan.

In the early 1980s, Mattel began creating new, non-White and non-American friends for Barbie with their "Dolls of the World" series, which included Chinese Barbie, Kenyan Barbie, and Mexican Barbie. Ethnic Barbie and other ethnic dolls can be characterized mostly by their traditional costumes with exotic accessories; this fact leads educators (e.g., duCille, 1994) to caution against accepting the stereotypical construction of ethnicity. As illustration, Chinese Barbie wears a traditional Chinese robe with chrysanthemum print over a slim skirt and is further exoticized by her oriental hairstyle (see Figure 1). Because modernized people do not normally wear their traditional costumes in the course of their day-to-day lives, ethnic Barbie dolls suggest that the group they represent belongs to a non-modern, even uncivilized, culture. The characterization of ethnic dolls in ancient costumes exudes at best the stereotypes of ethnic minorities from a Eurocentric cosmology, subjecting them to an inferior position.

FIGURE 2. May Lin Bratz doll, portrayed as Japanese by MGA Entertainment. *Photo by author.*

Similarly, there are several ethnic Bratz, one of whom is called May Lin (see Figure 2). Though she has a different skin color and set of exotic accessories, May Lin's body structure does not differ from that of her White Bratz counterpart. Not only does she portray a stereotypical Japanese woman in these respects, but she is also a cultural misrepresentation. May Lin has black hair and brown eyes, and wears a *kimono* and a pair of *geta* (traditional Japanese footwear). She holds an Oriental parasol in one hand and a fan in the other. Although the doll reads as Japanese in certain senses, the name "May Lin" resembles the popular Chinese female name "Mai-Lin," which literally translates as "beauty." Apparently, the dollmaker assumed that the American consumer would perceive May Lin as Japanese and that effectively Chinese and Japanese cultures have no differences.

The ethnic stereotypes we see in such dolls are by nature oversimplified and inaccurate, and even negative and dehumanizing, representations manipulated by cultural producers to illustrate the assumed values and behaviors of ethnic groups based mainly on their physical characteristics. By diminishing the depth of human character, stereotyping limits complex understandings of behaviors, instead imposing conscious, definitive ethnic characteristics and physical features that then become the basis for exclusion from the dominant society. Playdolls that portray ethnic characters can function to perpetuate stereotypes, or can be used to educate children about the problem of perpetuating them.

Glorification of Violence

Gender is a determining factor in how any cultural form is designed (Thomas, 2003). Marketing playdolls to boys necessitates a change in the terminology used to refer to them, thus boys' playdolls are called *action figures*, a name which suggests characters who act. As their name suggests, most action figures emphasize active role-playing, typically engaging boys in scenarios that involve fighting or killing. By embodying certain aspects of a masculine ideal, these playdolls contribute to a culture that glorifies violence. Action figures are less likely to be sexualized or associated with the domestic realm than girls' playdolls (Thomas, 2003).

In 1964, Hassenfeld Brothers (Hasbro, 2008) introduced G.I. Joe to America. Fighting soldiers like G.I. Joes and similar action figures developed later continue to feed Americans' fascination with violence by opening up new cultural terrain for violent media that targets youths. Today, American children live in a society saturated with increasingly violent media. Violent films, video and computer games, television programs, and comic strips, as forces of a violent culture, are encountered throughout our lives. Gunter and Harrison (2002) found that violent media targeting children have increased dramatically over the past 20 years. Broad cultural fascination with such media has effectively transformed media characters into three-dimensional action figures. Action figures are now part of the media industry, and are marketed simultaneously with newly released films and video games. They have become increasingly violent, equipped with more high-tech, sophisticated, and destructive weapons.

Representations of violence and masculinity often go hand-in-hand when developing and marketing toys to boys. The proliferation of both action figures and violent media

programs projects an image of masculinity that represents man as a warrior, fighter, or savior of humankind. G.I. Joe and many other action figures glorify muscularity and violent confrontations, legitimating a culture of male strength and violence. In this way, boys' dolls also continue to reinforce rigidly constructed gender stereotypes. By encouraging violent play, aggression, and stereotypical machismo, these dolls serve to model negative roles and behaviors for children.

Dehumanizing People of Color

The practice of dehumanizing people of color through playdolls has roots in early children's literature. Wilkinson (1987) expressed that Black stereotypes (e.g., "Aunt Jemima") were prevalent in dolls of the late 19th century. One notorious example is a character from the 1895 children's storybook, *The Adventures of Two Dutch Dolls*, as illustrated by Florence Upton. In this book, the golliwog doll simultaneously resembles a monster and certain stereotypes of people of color. Despite the fact that these dolls' physical features are exaggerated (black face, pop eyes, big red mouth) and that psychologists have found that these features gave children nightmares (Fraser, 1966), golliwog dolls nevertheless remain popular today. As illustrated here, the racism demonstrated in children's literature often extends to the toy industry.

People of color have also been dehumanized by action figures. Tarzan's line of toys, for example, features fighting creatures equipped with deadly weapons. Two action figures are included in the packet The Epic Adventures of Tarzan: Jungle King Tarzan and Leopard Man (see Figure 3). Of these two figures, the Black one is portrayed as a beast-like creature, with sharp claws and leopard fur, who wears a necklace made of animal teeth. By contrast, the White figure wears a superman outfit, carries more modernized accessories, and gestures grandly as if he is about to save the world; the packaging states that this figure, the Jungle King Tarzan, "rules the jungle and protects it from all who would do evil."

FIGURE 3. Packet of The Epic Adventures of Tarzan, including two action figures: Jungle King Tarzan (the White figure on the left) and Leopard Man (the Black figure on the right). *Photo by author.*

Dehumanizing people of color is a form of racism that positions the dominant group as more human than and superior to other racial groups. When racist characteristics and messages are portrayed in children's toys, they have the potential to help shape children's subconscious perceptions of reality. For this reason, when working with children, it is important to take the pedagogical opportunity to deconstruct depictions of White playdolls as human, and even superhuman, and Black playdolls as beasts. Examining the visual characteristics of playdolls in terms of their symbolic, sociocultural, and political meanings can guide children in analyzing and deconstructing how their playthings reaffirm and translate external reality. Children can learn how their playdolls act as instruments of indoctrination that perpetuate racial, ethnic, and gender stereotypes (Wilkinson, 1987), as well as how to deconstruct the dominant, often prejudiced, attitudes and perceptions manifested in these dolls.

FIGURE 4. Get Real Girl doll, one of the action and sports dolls for girls by Avon. *Photo by author.*

CONCLUSION

Investigating the material culture of children's playdolls entails a process of historical inquiry and critical questioning about these aesthetic and cultural products, as well as reflection upon how they manifest social attitudes, beliefs, and values. Toys such as playdolls are not mere playthings for children; rather, they serve "a prominent function in disseminating values, beliefs, and race and gender norms, and in reinforcing attitudes" (Wilkinson, 1987, p. 20). Art educators approaching playdolls as pedagogical sites should be concerned with such critical questions as the following: What roles does a doll play in educating or mis-educating children about issues of gender, violence, racism, and ethnicity? How do dolls convey negative attitudes or images about an ethnic group that differs in physical characteristics from the dominant group? In what ways do the formal characteristics of the doll embody Eurocentric, if indeed prejudiced or biased, attitudes? To what extent does the playdoll or action figure offer a positive role model for children of the ethnicity the doll depicts? What racial, gender, and ethnic perceptions and misperceptions does the playdoll reinforce?

A focus on material culture in art education should guide children to examine the materials, forms, and meanings of their everyday artifacts and how these strongly influence the ways in which they perceive themselves and the outside world. Exposing children to playdolls that more closely reflect their lives and offer varied storylines would also give them a wider, more positive spectrum of possibilities to enable personal agency; for example, less-violent action figures and fashion dolls that break gender stereotypes or challenge assumed but unrealistic ideals. In contrast to Barbie dolls, Julz Chavez, a former Mattel employee, has created a line of Get Real Girl dolls of various ethnic backgrounds that enjoy sports activities such as scuba diving, snowboarding, and surfing. These action dolls set themselves apart from Barbie and provide positive role models for young girls (see Figure 4).

Playdolls can be especially illustrative and illuminating in presenting tangible evidence about mainstream ideologies, which often remain unchallenged. They create "mental representations of images to be expected" (Wilkinson, 1987, p. 19). Through examining playdolls and reconstructing personal and social experiences with students, teachers can use playdolls as pedagogical sites to guide children in exploring the personal, visual, cultural, and sociopolitical ramifications of material culture. In so doing, teachers help students develop the critical knowledge and sensitivity needed to deconstruct and resist prejudiced cultural products and images.

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JUDI WARRICK PETKAU is an educator at the Weisman Art Museum in Minneapolis and a PhD candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota. Her current research focuses on the role of the art museum in teacher preservice and in-service professional development and in the complex processes of interpreting meanings through encounters with art.

JACK RICHARDSON, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Art Education at The Ohio State University—Newark. His work explores philosophical, theoretical, and social implications of expanded notions of space and place as they pertain to understanding the production, interpretation, and instruction of art. He received an MFA from the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles and his PhD at Penn State University. Recent articles include "Interventionist Art Education: Contingent Communities, Social Dialogue, and Public Collaboration" (2009) and "Processing Process: The Event of Making Art" (2011) (co-authored with Dr. Sydney Walker), both published in *Studies in Art Education.*

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SARA WILSON MCKAY, PhD, is currently Interim Chair and Associate Professor of Art Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. Her research on the politics of vision explores the ways that works of art create new seeing, how looking can be a dialogic process, and the possibilities of seeing more of the educational process in and through art. In her publications in the leading journals of art education, Wilson McKay examines how the arts encourage democratic participation toward social justice. She has recently co-authored a manuscript with Melanie Buffington titled *Practice Theory: Seeing the Power of Art Teacher Researchers* to be published by National Art Education Association.

MATTER MATTERS:
ART EDUCATION *and* MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES

I can think of no other book on material culture more important to the field of art education at this time than *Matter Matters*. Informed by the recent 'turn to things' in the humanities and the social sciences, and building on the work of noted art educators, this perceptive, thoughtful, and engaging book considers the intersections between art education and material culture, and the possible alignment of one with the other. It complicates and extends current understandings of material culture and art education, opens up new lines of inquiry, and suggests pedagogical possibilities not heretofore considered.

The essays in this collection eloquently demonstrate that art education and material culture, when considered together, offer rich opportunities to think in new ways about the promise of art education in late modernity. *Matter Matters* succeeds not only as an introductory text to this topic, but also as a sophisticated analysis of how individuals interact with and create the objects that come to define, shape, enable, and limit their own becoming in time and place.

Central to the success of the book is the way in which each author draws attention to how our knowledge and understanding of the world is intimately tied to objects, to what we do with them, and to what they do to us. *Matter Matters* has the potential to significantly inform and influence the study of material culture within art education, and I have no doubt that future discussion of material culture in art education will arise from this book.

—Dónal O'Donoghue, Associate Professor and Chair of Art Education
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

With a fitting dedication to June King McFee, this anthology is aimed at nothing less than dramatically changing the field of art education. The editors' goal is to challenge the mainstream approaches used in art education by broadening the kinds of objects that are studied, and expanding acceptable theoretical approaches through the study of material culture. By moving beyond visual culture studies, they propose making all human-mediated expressions available in the art educator's curriculum.

Divided into a section on theory and one on practice, *Matter Matters* is effectively grounded in the cross-disciplinary literature on material culture studies. The authors embrace artists such as Berry Beaumont, Kate Bingaman-Burt, Mark Dion, Shepard Fairey, Lucy and Jorge Orta, Michael Rakowicz, and Fred Wilson while introducing items of interest to include Maori talking sticks, Indigenous pottery, dolls, sticker art, graffiti, yard art, rocks, mugs, pez containers, jewelry, lipsticks, bath tiles, cell phones, and various other objects.

In keeping with Bolin and Blandy's ongoing interest in curricula aimed at creating informed citizens, authors suggest lessons that connect students to the world as opposed to separating them from it. Suggested material culture approaches are persuasively used to unveil the power in objects we don't normally think about, sometimes because of their constant presence in our lives.

The chapters in this book take a multi-sensory approach that should cause the reader to rethink the singular sensory focus of art education as one that segregates that which is visual. Art educators would do well to consider the ideas expressed in *Matter Matters*.

—Kristin G. Congdon, Professor Emerita, University of Central Florida

ISBN: 978-1-890160-51-7
9 781890 160517 90000
P8-CSY-048

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